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HIS LITTLE MOTHER

AND OTHER

TALES AND SKETCHES

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN"

Etc., Etc.



NEW YORK

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HIS LITTLE MOTHER

HIS LITTLE MOTHER—

PART I.

TEN YEARS OLD.

THEY sat close together—a rather isolated little pair, boy and girl, apparently brother and sister—at the merry tea-table of a children's party.

Children's parties then were not exactly what they are now. We used to be invited at four o'clock, and we always left at half-past eight—on our feet, generally—for our toilets were not of a kind which would startle the streets of that innocent country town. We had short sleeves, certainly, and comparatively low necks, but tippets and long white linen gloves made all right, and our frocks descended comfortably to the ankle. Besides which we wore beautiful white frilly "trousers"—or plain ones of the same material as the dress. Hats, too, which really covered the head, and were tied down, gypsy fashion, over a bush of curls—if our hair would curl; if not, it was plaited into tails—the more the better. I remember, on

state occasions, my mother used to plait mine into six, three on each side, tied with bright ribbons, of which I was exceedingly proud.

This little girl — perhaps she had no mother to be conceited about her hair, for it was only divided into two tails, not very carefully plaited, and tied with rather shabby brown ribbon. Neither she nor the little boy was quite as well dressed as the rest of the young party; but they were neat and clean, and, though not exactly blooming children, were interesting, if only from the way they seemed to hang together, as though accustomed to depend upon themselves, or rather upon one another, for everything.

At least, so it seemed to the lady who watched them — one Miss Waldershare, a rich and lonely woman, glad of any interest, especially when it came in the shape of a child. She was only a passing visitor in the town, and had come almost accidentally to the party, where she had nobody belonging to her. Neither had these two little people, apparently. All the other young guests had come with mothers, aunts, or nurses; but these, Miss Waldershare had observed, had walked in, walked up-stairs to take their things off, and walked down again, hand-in-hand, quite alone.

The two little faces, unlike, and yet with a cer-

tain family look which satisfied her as to their relationship, touched her more than all the merry faces round the table. Particularly so when dangerous dainties circulated round it, and the boy would look appealingly to the girl, who smiled back either a "No" or a "Yes." But both were given smilingly and accepted obediently. He was a big, handsome boy, much bigger and handsomer than his sister, with a soft, good-natured, rather weak expression; whereas she was small, dark, thin, with sharp, firm features; an "old" face rather, which might almost have been called plain but for the look of love in her eyes, and the sweet decision of her mouth. All the better! since the boy, pretty as he was, seemed of an undecided nature; as if it were almost a relief to have somebody to settle everything for him.

So at least thought Miss Waldershare, amused to notice how character shows itself even at ten years old.

"You are about ten, I suppose, my dear," said she to the little girl, "and a sensible girl you are, too, not to let your brother eat too much plum-cake. And he is a good boy to mind what you say," added she, patting the handsome head, which had dropped disconsolately when, for the third time, the tempting dish was allowed to pass.

"We are both ten, ma'am" (children were always taught to say "ma'am" and "sir" in those days), "we are twins, though I am so little, and he is so big and tall. I am obliged to be very careful what he eats. He is not as strong as he looks, and he does not like being ill or taking physic."

"Nobody does, I think. But he is a lucky boy to have such a wise little sister."

"I am his little mother," answered the child, in a grave, old-fashioned way. "Mamma told me I was to be his little mother till she came back again."

"Is she away from home, then?"

"A long way from home—in India. She has been gone two years and a month. It will be four years and eleven months before she and papa are back again."

"Four years, ten months, and two weeks—we counted yesterday, Dor," corrected the little boy—to which the sister assented, looking quite pleased, and saying that "he was always so good at arithmetic."

"And what was it he called you?" asked Miss Waldershare, more and more interested, yet not liking to seem too curious, as she thought the ordinary reticence of politeness ought to be observed with children as much as with grown-up folks.

The little girl laughed. "Oh, Dor—or Dormouse—or Dor-beetle—I have lots of names. But my right name is Dorcas. Rather ugly, is it not? But then his is a very pretty one—Cyprian. Mamma said he was always to be called Cyprian in full. She is very fond of him. She thinks there never was such a boy." This was said in a confidential whisper, as the child's heart warmed instinctively to the motherly, childless heart of her questioner.

Somebody now called upon Miss Waldershare to start a game, and she was separated from her two small friends, and swamped in the general vortex for an hour or two; at the end of which time, however, she had contrived to find out all that was to be found out concerning Dorcas and Cyprian.

Their parents, though remotely connected with the little town, where everybody knew everybody, had never been seen there, having gone to Calcutta, or Benares, or Bombay—nobody was quite sure where—leaving behind these children with three old ladies, distant relations, who resided here. The giver of the party scarcely knew the names of her small guests—they were merely "the next-door children," invited "for kindness."

And, though both their hostess and everybody else was really kind to them—or would have been, had they mixed themselves up easily with the rest

—still, to the very end of the evening, Miss Waldershare noticed a certain forlornness in the little pair, who went about together, or sat close together, hand-in-hand, as if unused to general society, and belonging specially to one another, and not to anybody else. So much so that even she, generally so successful in shaking up a party together, found them a difficult element to deal with.

First, the boy was so exceedingly shy that there was no doing anything with him. He would not, or could not, play at any game—not even simple “hunt the slipper,” or merry “kiss-in-the-ring.” He refused absolutely to give or to “cry” a forfeit; and when, tempted by the fun and laughing, he was at last lured into blind-man’s-buff, he somehow got into everybody’s way, and being accidentally knocked down, burst into such a piteous howl that he was obliged to be carried off at once up-stairs.

There, ever so long after, Miss Waldershare found him, with his faithful little sister sitting patiently beside him, in the deserted bedroom.

“Is he hurt?” the lady asked, anxiously.

“Oh no; only he had rather stay here.”

“But why should you stay, my little girl? You like fun; I saw you playing very merrily. Go back to the rest.”

“Without Cyprian?” said Dorcas, with wide-open

eyes; as if such an idea produced in her mind simple astonishment. "Oh dear no! He does not like being alone. Mamma told me never to leave Cyprian."

"That settles the point," said Miss Waldershare, smiling; and went down-stairs again. But several times she returned, and tried to coax the little fellow back to the gay party below. However, he was either too shy, or too sulky, or too much accustomed to have everything his own way, with his "little mother" for his devoted slave; for though once or twice he yielded to persuasion so far as to go to the top of the stairs—being evidently of a soft and yielding disposition—still he always came back again, and sheltered himself behind his sister, as if, though so much less than himself, she was his natural refuge.

For Dorcas, she did her utmost, poor little woman, to get him into a better mind; and when all failed—and the boy's gentle obstinacy and hesitating sweetness were most difficult to make anything out of—she soothed him, she comforted him, she apologized for him. Finally, when all the kindly inquirers left him and her together, she sat beside the little fellow in the somewhat dreary bedroom, listening to the noisy rout down-stairs, for very nearly two hours.

"Would you like to go and have a dance? They are dancing, you hear?"

Dorcas looked up at Miss Waldershare with a world of grateful pleasure in her eyes. She was not pretty; but she had that sort of airy, well-set figure which seems made for dancing. Already her little feet were beating time to the music.

"Do go, child," said the kind lady. "Run away; I will stay with your brother."

Poor little "Dor" was almost off—the music was playing such a lovely tune, nearly as enticing as that of the Pied Piper of Hamelin—when she felt her dress caught by Cyprian's imploring hand.

She sat down again. "*He* doesn't dance—he doesn't like it. Thank you—no. Perhaps I had better stay with Cyprian. It will soon be time for going home. Mamma said we were never to be out after dark, on account of Cyprian. He catches cold so soon."

"But this is a warm summer night," began Miss Waldershare, feeling inclined to argue the point; and doubtful of the wisdom of allowing one child to sacrifice everything to another child. Still there was something so pathetic in this literal obedience to the wishes of the far-away mother—this entire devotion to a rather trying little brother—that the kind stranger lady, unto whom it had pleased Heaven

to give neither the sweetness nor the bitterness of family duties, held her tongue and remonstrated no more.

When next time she went after them—for amid all the fun and frolic down-stairs she was haunted by a vision of the little forlorn twins sitting in the deserted bedroom all alone—she found her birds were flown.

Dorcas, she learned, had quietly crept away with her little brother, not waiting for supper; though she had been seen standing for several minutes at the hall-door till she could say good-bye “politely” to the hostess.

“Mamma said we were never to go away from any visit without thanking the lady of the house for our pleasant evening,” she had explained to somebody; and been laughed at a good deal for her “old-fashioned” ways.

No doubt, the family thought, she learned them from those three prim elderly ladies with whom she must lead such a dull life, “to say nothing of that fanciful, disagreeable little brother, to whom she gives up everything, apparently never thinking of herself at all. Poor little soul!”

But Miss Waldershare, who had seen many a child who thought of itself a great deal, who was everybody’s pet, from whom nobody ever expected any-

thing—and certainly never got it—turn out to be not only the most unpleasant but most unhappy of young people, did not altogether pity “Dor.” The child had at least—so one of the other children said—“somebody to make a fuss over.”

But, having a firm belief in compensation—also some sadly humble belief in herself as an instrument of the same—for there are those to whom Heaven seems to deny all personal joys, in order that they should be better able to make other people happy—Miss Waldershare set her benevolent wits to work to invent some small pleasure for these two children, whose pleasures were so few.

Fate, kindly seized upon, often turns kind. The very next day every vacant wall in the town broke out into an eruption of huge handbills, announcing that Signor Bianchini, the celebrated pyrotechnist, would on a certain evening have a grand display in the High Street; and would end by walking—under patronage of the Worshipful the Mayor—from one of the windows in the Town Hall to a window opposite, on the tight-rope, amid a shower of rockets and Roman candles.

Now, the noble art of pyrotechny was then in its infancy, and Blondin the Great had neither been born nor thought of. Consequently the little town was much excited, and on the rumor being spread

that the hero of the day was no other than a certain Jem White—who had once fled the town in disgrace for throwing crackers and squibs on Gunpowder Plot day, to return in honor and glory as the celebrated Signor Bianchini—a touch of romance added to the interest. All the townspeople, high and low—the low in the street, and the high upon every available shop-front and first-floor window—assembled to witness the show.

Miss Waldershare, putting off her departure for a day, engaged a tiny room with a balconied window, over a bookseller's shop; and thither, after much perturbation and great hesitation on the part of the three old ladies, she succeeded in carrying off her little friends, Dorcas and Cyprian Hall. There, by seven o'clock on a July night, she established herself, with the twins one on each side of her, which arrangement, however, was soon modified.

"May he come beside me, ma'am? If there should be a—a noise—fireworks do make a noise sometimes, I think?—he will like to be closer beside me. He is rather timid, you see," added with a half-apologetic air the "little mother."

She was not timid—not even when the balcony gave a sudden crack, and with involuntary instinct she used all her small strength to push Cyprian back upon the safe window-ledge, remaining outside her-

self. But it was a false alarm, though it frightened Miss Waldershare a little, and Cyprian very much—until there was proved to be no danger, and the trio settled themselves to entire enjoyment of the sight.

What a sight it was! One of the many children who saw it remembers it still: even after five-and-forty years! the proud delight of sitting up till eleven at night, and being initiated into the mysteries of the nocturnal world—the streets, lit with oil-lamps (gas being still unknown there), the houses, dim and tall, and the quiet starry sky overhead, such a contrast to the noisy crowd below. Then that black platform, whence all the wonderful show was to come—what dozens of young eyes gazed on it in eager suspense! till, punctual to the appointed minute, there shot forth, with a whizz, a whirr, and a glare, the first rocket. Up it went—making everybody jump, and Cyprian utter an audible cry—up like a live creature, flying, or rather shooting, right into the sky, no one could exactly see where, till it fell down, in a shower of fiery rain, on the very heads of the crowd, who screamed and laughed, and ran hither and thither; trying, some to avoid, some to snatch at, the blazing sparks.

Another, and another, and another—each rising higher and falling steadier than the last; then a

grand illumination of "Roman candles," showing all the faces of the people below, and lighting up the architecture of the old Town Hall, which the townsfolk were so proud of. Finally, a most wonderful set piece—a wheel of light, which kept turning and turning, every moment more rapidly, throwing out a shower of sparks all round.

"The most beautiful thing we ever saw in all our life—isn't it, Cyprian?" cried Dor. "What can it be?"

"A Catherine-wheel," said Miss Waldershare, smiling at the "we" and the "our life" in the singular number—so natural to the twins.

"A Catherine-wheel?" repeated the sister, meditatively. "I wonder has that anything to do with St. Catherine? Mamma had a picture of her leaning against a wheel. She was so pretty—but with a sweet sad kind of face, something like mamma's."

"You have a pretty mamma, then?" said Miss Waldershare, ignoring the other adjective. "And you have heard of St. Catherine—and very likely about Raffaele, who painted her."

"Oh, yes," brightening up extremely. "I like to read all I can about painters, for I am so fond of drawing. I often try to draw. Mamma says I shall learn properly some day, and then I can teach Cyprian."

"Does Cyprian like reading?"

"N—no," with a slight hesitation. "Indeed, he has not time for reading. He learns Latin, you know. So I read for both of us, and then I can tell him anything interesting. It saves him so much trouble."

"I don't like trouble, and I can't imagine how anybody could like reading," said Cyprian, with his most attractive smile.

"But he likes writing, and he writes so well—small hand—and a great deal better than I," eagerly said the little sister. "And he can read written-hand beautifully—makes out every word in mamma's letters. If you knew how delightful are mamma's letters—as interesting as a story-book. We get one every mail—and we look for it days before it comes. It has been coming for a week now. Perhaps we shall find it when we get home to-night."

"I hope so," said the lady, with a slight tremble in her voice. Never, either as child or woman, had Miss Waldershare got any mother's letters.

"If it does come, and if she cared to call to-morrow, perhaps we might let her see it," whispered Cyprian to his sister, who slightly hesitated, as if that were a privilege too great for any mortal creature.

"To-morrow, my dears, I shall be miles and miles away. I shall not see you for a very long time, I fear."

"What a pity! Because I shall tell mamma all about you—we always tell her everything—and if she knew how kind you have been to us both she would let me show you her letters. But I should like to ask her first. And it will be six months before we get the answer."

"Of course it will," said Miss Waldershare, thinking of the great gulf of time and space between mother and children—of the letters received ignorantly, months after date, on both sides—and of how sad it was, that with such tender love between children and parents, the one should grow up and the other should grow old in such a long separation that when they did meet again it would be almost as strangers.

"But come, my dears, the fireworks are beginning again. And there is Signor Bianchini on the tight-rope. See how beautifully he balances himself with that long pole. Would you like to be a tight-rope dancer, Cyprian?"

"He is to be a gentleman and go to college, and then go out to India to papa," said Dorcas, with a little touch of pride. And when the boy, boy-like, clapped his hands with delight, watching the ci-

devant Jem White make his perilous journey over the upturned heads of the crowd, the more sensitive girl shuddered, and turned pale.

"Would you like to go in, and not look any more?" said Miss Waldershare, kindly.

"No, thank you—something might happen—Cyprian might overbalance himself. No, I would rather stay by Cyprian."

And though still white and trembling, she did stay, till the very last. But, besides the buns and oranges, a glass of wine had to be administered to the child before she was able to walk home. She seemed but a fragile little thing, despite her spirit and—only the word was not known in those days—her "pluck."

The last of the fireworks shot up, a sheaf of flame, hissing and crackling, above the Town Hall and the old church-tower, right into the silent stars; there was a shout of ecstatic cheering from the crowd, and a final "sending round the hat," which ceremony had been gone through several times already, from window to window, Dorcas apologizing sadly that she had no penny to drop into it—"But mamma told us that papa was not rich, and that we were not to spend more pennies than we could help." And then the signor bowed his thanks—in a theatrical attitude, beside the very biggest of Catherine-

wheels—and the crowd began to separate. The night's delight was ended.

Miss Waldershare walked through the fast-thinning street with her two *protégés*, one in each hand. Cyprian, no longer shy, was chattering like a magpie, but Dorcas, who had hitherto done the talking, now began to be silent, evidently very tired. Her friend would have liked to take her up and carry her—she was strong enough and the child small enough—but Dorcas was so astonished at the idea that she gave it up, and merely helped the poor little girl as well as she could till they reached the Terrace.

"I will just wait and see if you have got your letter, and then I will bid you good-bye. I am going away to-morrow morning," said Miss Waldershare, with a slight regret at her heart. Her life was almost as solitary as that of these little people.

"Is that the children? Bring them in at once to me," said a sharp voice behind the sleepy maid-servant who opened the door.

"Oh, Miss Moffat, is that you? Have you got mamma's letters?"

"There are letters."

"I am so glad," said Miss Waldershare. She kissed the two children, and walked quickly away.

By one of those accidental delays which visit us

all, she, however, did not leave next morning. Business—other people's business, of course—rose up, which detained her nearly a week; and being rather troublesome business, her mind was so full of it that she hardly gave a thought to the twins, Dorcas and Cyprian, till, coming home from church, she passed the end of the Terrace, and saw two little figures walking down it, slowly and quietly, hand in hand, two little black figures, so far as her short sight enabled her to judge, which made her at first think it could not possibly be they. Nevertheless, she felt a strong inclination to call and say good-bye over again—for she was going abroad, on a mission of mercy, with a sick friend, and it might be months, nay years, before she was in England again.

So she sent up her card, asking to see "little Miss Hall."

The servant, looking rather surprised, showed her into an empty parlor, where she waited several minutes, and then the two poor little children, still hand in hand, walked in.

Truly "poor" children, having sustained the utmost loss a child can know.

They were dressed in black from head to foot—not even a white collar—and their faces were very grave, Cyprian's being rosy still, but out of Dorcas's every ray of color had departed. Her eyes looked

as if she had been crying all day long, and the voice she spoke in, though quiet, was forced and strange.

"How do you do, ma'am? It is kind of you to come and see us."

"My poor little girl, what has happened?"

"Mamma is dead," cried Cyprian, with a burst of tears.

"Yes, our mamma is dead," said Dorcas, but without crying. She seemed to have wept all her tears away.

"But—the letter?"

"It was from papa. He said mamma had been dead a week. That is two months ago. So it is two months and a week since we had any mamma. I can't understand it at all," added the boy, shaking his head in a forlorn sort of way.

His sister put her arm round him, and drew him to her, at which he began sobbing afresh. In truth, they all wept together; Miss Waldershare never thinking till afterwards how strange it was that she, who had had no tears for many a year, should shed them now, over a woman whom she had never seen and scarcely heard of.

She wondered what kind of person the father was, and even went so far as to ask if she might see his letter.

"Oh yes" (no hesitation now). "But I remem-

ber Miss Moffat has it. She said she should keep it, lest papa might forget his promise, and take us away from here."

"Would you wish to go?"

"Oh no. It doesn't matter. The Miss Moffats are very kind to us. Everything goes on as usual, except for mamma's letters. She has been a year away, and this is the first time the mail ever came in without bringing us one of mamma's letters."

The child spoke in a dull, sad, almost complaining tone; evidently even she did not yet realize—how difficult it is for any of us to realize!—that sudden pause of death-silence.

"Did your mamma ever say—had you any idea—?" began Miss Waldershare, and stopped. What use was it to question? The plain, hard fact was there—the children were motherless.

"And you are going abroad, too?" said Dorcas, when she had sat a good while, holding the kind hand whose firm clasp was the only way in which Miss Waldershare could express sympathy. "We shall never see you again. It will be just like mamma's going. Only you have no little children to leave behind."

"No, nobody."

"Mamma would not have left us if she could have helped it—she told me so—but she had to go

with papa. She said so once—I was not to tell Cyprian, and I almost forgot it myself till now—it seemed so impossible—but she said—” Dorcas hesitated.

“Said what, my dear?”

“That even if she died we were not to mind, as she would not be much farther away from us than when she was in India, perhaps not so far. What did she mean?”

Miss Waldershare tried to explain; tried to put into the child’s heart, without giving any impression of fear or pain, that heavenly consolation of the continual nearness of the dead, of the narrow barrier that for all pure and loving souls exists between the life here and the life everlasting.

“I understand,” Dorcas said, at last. “And that is why we were to remember what she used to say to us, and do what she wished us to do, just as much as if she were here beside us. It will be much the same now. Do you hear what the lady says? Do you understand her, Cyprian?”

Poor Cyprian! He had ceased crying now, and was squatting on the hearth-rug, playing with two kittens, quite merry and content. None the less, possibly all the more, did Miss Waldershare say, “Poor Cyprian!”

Her time was limited, and she rose to go.

"But I shall not forget you, dear. I shall write to you now and then."

"Oh, how nice! We never get letters from anybody, except mamma." Here came a sudden shudder of recollection and a wild look, almost of despair. "I forgot. We shall never have any more letters from mamma. What shall we do? Oh, Cyprian, Cyprian!"

That cry, so shrill, so full of intolerable agony, made the little boy spring to his feet.

"Dor—Dor, what is the matter? Please be quiet. You frighten me so—you make me so miserable."

Then the sister, with a violent effort, checked what was growing into an almost hysterical scream. She put her arms round Cyprian, and hid her face on his shoulder till the sobs ceased, and she lifted up her face, deadly white, indeed, but quite composed.

"Yes, he is right; I must be quiet. He has nobody to take care of him but me now. Thank you, Miss Waldershare, and we shall be delighted to get your letters. And Cyprian shall write—he writes so very well, you know," with a faint smile, as she put up her lips for a farewell kiss.

It had not quite vanished, that piteous smile, even when Miss Waldershare caught her last glimpse of the twins, standing watching her down the terrace,

with their faces pressed against the window-pane. Two rather forlorn figures, with their mourning clothes, and grave, sad looks; but they were two—and they stood close together, hand in hand, as usual. Also, Cyprian had his head safely nestled into the shoulder of his “little mother.”

The dead mother—could she have beheld them—might have felt that life was not altogether hopeless to her children.

PART II.

TWENTY YEARS OLD.

MISS WALDERSHARE did not return to England for ten years.

Part of that time she spent with her friend, very peacefully, even happily; and when the invalid needed her no more there were many others who did need her. That sweet, sunny nook of southern France was always full of sick and sorrowful folk, come to die, or to watch their beloved die, beside the blue Mediterranean. Consequently this rich and kind-hearted English lady, who had no home ties, never wanted—who ever does want?—an object whereon to expend her time, her money, and her sympathies. And this was well. Sad she might sometimes be; but she was never either idle or lonely; as in truth no woman ever is, unless she wishes to be the one, and deserves, by her unloveliness, to be the other.

Miss Waldershare thus lingered on, year after year, in the place whither she had accidentally drifted, until it almost became a second home. She

might never have come home at all—that is, to England—had not business called her to the little town where she had happened to be born, but where, nevertheless, she had not a single living tie. And in ten years even her few acquaintances there had so entirely disappeared that there was not a house she cared to go to. She put up at the inn. And in spite of what the cynic writes about the man who, going through life, finds “his warmest welcome at an inn,” this well-beloved maiden lady was so accustomed to find every door open to her and every face a friendly face, that the inn appeared just a little solitary, even dull.

Having transacted her business, she wandered about, noticing how many new houses had sprung up on the skirts of the old town; but the place itself remained unchanged. There were the same names over the shops in the High Street; the usual market went on—just below the Town Hall, from the windows of which Signor Bianchini had taken his memorable tight-rope promenade, watched by herself and the little twins, Dorcas and Cyprian Hall, on the night of the fireworks. The fatal night—how long they must have remembered it!—when, on coming home, they got the news of their mother’s death.

“Poor little souls!” she thought, recalling that time. Familiar as she was with sorrow, the expres-

sion of the children's faces, as she last saw them looking out of the parlor window that Sunday afternoon, had never gone out of her mind. "But they cannot be children now. They must nearly be grown up by this time. I wonder what has become of them."

For though she had faithfully written, and received, at long intervals, several letters in return, not from Cyprian—"he had so little time," his sister said—but from Dorcas, still ten years is a long period to keep up any correspondence, especially a foreign one, and with such very small correspondents. Miss Waldershare was scarcely surprised when it gradually ceased. Two years at least had passed since she had had any tidings of the young Halls.

She was a shy and sensitive person, curiously so for a middle-aged woman of good position, whom nobody would have expected to have any doubt of herself at all. But she had—though circumstances rather than natural temperament had caused this. She never liked to intrude herself upon anybody, especially the young, and was only too ready to accept the fact that people had forgotten her. Therefore, even when she passed the end of the Terrace where the twins used to live, she hesitated, and was some minutes in making up her mind to knock at Miss Moffatt's door.

There it was, the brass plate with "The Misses Moffatt—" who had begun by keeping a school—staring her in the face. She lingered, looked round, might even have gone back again, but that a lady and gentleman crossed the road to her. He tall, fair, handsome; the girl hanging on his arm (people usually walked arm-in-arm in those days), small, dark, and decidedly plain. Miss Waldershare might have recognized them had she not forgotten the lapse of time. But they knew her at once, and called her by name.

"We had no idea you were in England. When did you come? Why did you not let us know?" said the young man, impulsively; and, in spite of the incipient beard, she recalled at once the pretty boy-face of Cyprian Hall. His sister—yes, of course, it was his sister—his "little mother" that used to be. She looked like it still—being both graver and older in appearance than her twin.

"Then you have not quite forgotten me?" said the lady, pleased, as most middle-aged ladies are, at being recognized after so long a time.

"Oh! Dor knew you at once. Dor never forgets anybody."

And though Dor scarcely said a word, leaving all the talk to her brother, who seemed to have a great gift that way, the pleasure in her eyes, and the warm

grasp of her hand, proved to Miss Waldershare the truth of that character. Yes, Dorcas Hall looked like a person "who never forgot anybody."

"You will come in, of course? It is just tea-time; and Miss Moffat will be glad to see you, or any friend of ours. There is only one Miss Moffat now. The other two are dead; poor old dears! so Dor and I have almost the house to ourselves—except for Mr. Moffat, a nephew of theirs; but he is a great scholar, and as quiet as a tame cat. Bless me! I hope he didn't hear me. There he is."

And Cyprian nodded to a half-bald head, with bright eyes, which eyes had evidently been watching them from the window.

"Very quiet, but a good fellow for all that," continued the youth, with a slightly patronizing air. "He and I shall be off to Oxford in two months more, and then Dor will have to make the best of it alone."

Dor smiled, as if quite accustomed to "make the best of it," and they entered the house together.

When she took Miss Waldershare up-stairs to arrange her dress a little—for the "old maid" was just a shade "particular" as to her appearance—Dorcas explained, with a look of proud pleasure, that her brother was just going up for his matriculation examination.

"Papa was a long time in consenting; he was never at college himself, and does not see why a young man should go at all, especially one who might be a Calcutta merchant. But Cyprian does not want to be a merchant, and does not care to go out to Calcutta."

"No, indeed," cried Cyprian, meeting them on the staircase, and overhearing; "papa has married again, and there is a horrid lot of children. I had much rather stop at home with Dor. She makes me work—that is, if anybody could do it. But I'm an idle fellow—I shall never do much anyhow; shall I, Dor?" said he, with that charming frankness and engaging contrition which, in some people, seems equivalent to doing what they ought to do. They feel as if confessing a fault were almost as good as amending it.

"You will do more by-and-by," said the sister, with a sad expression flitting through her smile. "Cyprian has had a great deal to contend against, Miss Waldershare. Papa could not afford to send him to a public school, so he was obliged to get educated here, and when at last he went to a clergyman to study—he—he came back again."

"Was sent back," laughed the young fellow, with charming candor, which, however, sent the hot blood into his sister's face. "But I am sure if I told the

whole story to Miss Waldershare she would agree with me that it was a confounded shame."

"Tea is waiting," said Dorcas, hastily, and then introduced the bald-headed man—not such a very old man either—as "Mr. Moffat, from Oxford, who has been so very kind to Cyprian."

"Kindness itself!" added Cyprian. "I am sure, if I pass, it is his coaching I have to thank for it."

"You must pass," said Mr. Moffat, and "He will pass," said Dorcas.

"Oh, don't lecture! I hate lecturing. But I mean to be such a good boy—some day."

That day, however, had been evidently long of coming. Not that he was in the least a "naughty" boy. On the contrary, Miss Waldershare liked him extremely, and could quite understand how everybody liked him too. He had that invincible attractiveness, born of a pleasant inward conviction that he did attract, which makes some people so charming. They throw themselves on you with the simplicity of a child to whom no one has ever said a hard word; they are quite sure of your regard—so sure that you have not the heart to refuse it. Before she had been an hour in the room with him, Miss Waldershare felt a weak consciousness that, were he to ask her, she would do almost anything for young Cyprian Hall.

And his "little mother."

"Yes, I am still his 'little mother,'" Dorcas answered, smiling, to some question which Miss Waldershare put on bidding good-bye—not a farewell at all, for she had been already persuaded by Cyprian to remain in the town a few days longer ("just to comfort poor Dor after I am gone," said he, with a pleasing conviction that she would want comfort, and that nobody could make up to her for the loss of himself—which, perhaps, was not untrue). "He needed a 'little mother' more than most boys. And, besides, mamma told me to take care of him."

"Mamma said that"—"Mamma wished that," seemed, even after all these years, to be the invisible law of right to the orphans, evidently as completely orphans as if they had been left without either father or mother. And Dorcas, with her silentness and somewhat careworn face, much older-looking than that of her twin, seemed to have taken upon herself all the duties and anxieties of a mother.

Altogether, Miss Waldershare quitted the little household—where Miss Moffat, its nominal head, had never once appeared (she was an invalid, and Miss Hall managed everything)—with a somewhat heavy heart. The brightest bit, however—she being of a rather "sentimental" turn—was in the fancy she took for Mr. Moffat's honest countenance,

and the pleasure she had in watching how he seemed to do everything he could think of for quaint, plain, gentle Dorcas Hall.

She saw a good deal of both him and the twins during the next two days, and after Cyprian had started for Oxford in the highest spirits, and without a doubt concerning his "exam.," she and his sister had much talk together. But Dorcas was not very confidential, not even on the subject of Cyprian. In all she said there seemed to be some *arrière pensée*, a sense of past disappointment and future doubt, almost amounting to fear, which, putting together fragments which she rather betrayed than told, gave a still deeper uneasiness to the older and more experienced woman.

Cyprian did not much care for reading; found study difficult; his sister had taught herself Latin, a bit of Greek, and even something of mathematics, in order to teach him. He had never had any systematic education of any kind—well, that was not his fault, but Miss Waldershare knew that real students, true workers, who mean to make their way in the world, whether boy or girl, will, when they get into their teens, begin to educate themselves. And self-education is perhaps the soundest of all.

But Cyprian was twenty, and had not begun earnestly to study yet. If he passed even the prelim-

inary examination for Oxford, it would be, Dorcas was forced to own, chiefly owing to the excellent and gratuitous "coaching" given him for the last eight weeks by Mr. Moffat.

"But oh! Miss Waldershare, you see how much my poor boy has had to fight against!" pleaded the sister, in fond deprecation. "Even his good looks and his winning ways have been dangerous to him—because everybody is always admiring him, and inviting him out. Yet he is as steady as a rock—never gets into any ill ways, late hours or the like, and he is always so easily led, and so good and affectionate. To part from him will be dreadful, but I shall be content if I know he is all right, and if I can sometimes go and see him—Oxford men like to have their sisters visiting them, Mr. Moffat said. Only it must be pretty sisters—not such as me."

Miss Waldershare asked gravely "if it were Mr. Moffat who said that?" because she herself thought the little dark-eyed face and dainty figure made up a sister quite well-looking enough for any College "man."

"Well, then," said Dorcas, laughing, "I really will go up next Commemoration. It will be so grand to take a walk with Cyprian in his cap and gown. How handsome he will look—how proud mamma

would have been! Mamma always said Cyprian must go to Oxford."

So talked they, the elder and the younger woman, in the dim evening light—waiting for the letter—there were no telegraphs then—which was to bring the important news.

At last it came. Two letters arrived—the second being from Mr. Moffat. Dorcas laid it aside, and opened Cyprian's.

Only one line—Miss Waldershare could see. She saw also that Dorcas's poor little hands fell helplessly on her lap—she had instinctively sat down—and then were clasped together in a mute acceptance of the inevitable.

"I always expected it. He could not help it. He says he did his best. My poor boy!"

"Poor girl!" Miss Waldershare felt inclined to say, but she said nothing—only kissed her silently. Then Dorcas leaned her head on her friend's shoulder, and wept bitterly.

"Tears won't do," she said at last, drying them. "He will be here to-night, no doubt—or to-morrow morning—for he will have to go out to India at once. Papa said he must, if he failed in his matriculation. He has lost only too much time already. And we are wholly dependent upon papa! Oh my poor boy!"

She wrung her hands, oblivious of everything—

even of the second letter—which Miss Waldershare proposed to open and read.

“DEAR MISS HALL,—‘Plucked’ is a hard word—but Cyprian must not let his courage sink. Many a man has succeeded in the world after being plucked. Perhaps, after all, he is scarcely fit for University life, and this may be for the best in the end. Try to believe so—though I know it is hard. We shall be with you almost as soon as this letter.

Yours sincerely,

“JAMES MOFFAT.”

“How kind he is!” said Miss Waldershare.

“Yes, very kind.”

And so he was—as kind as Miss Waldershare herself—for the two took counsel together over the helpless sister many a time during the melancholy days which ensued, when it was necessary to arrange everything for Cyprian’s departure, and for the parting of the twins, literally for the first time in their lives—except that brief attempt at tutoring of which everybody had said as little as possible.

So great was the despair of both at first, that Miss Waldershare suggested Dorcas’s going out with him to India.

The girl shook her head. “No; it would be too expensive. It would vex papa. He only sent home money for one. Besides,” with a sad casting down of the eyes, “papa does not want me. He never did want us, you know.”

Miss Waldershare asked no explanation of what was evidently some family difficulty. She saw that Cyprian must go, and Dorcas stay behind—at least for the present. It was very sad—so sad that, being more accustomed to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, she put off a grand London visit, and remained still a few days more in the dull little town, where she knew not a creature but these, her sorrowful friends.

It was a terrible time. Most people nowadays know it—have witnessed or gone through it—when some young member of the family has to be sent away abroad;—an agony sharp as death, even under the best of circumstances. Coming nearer and nearer each day to the fatal day, was almost—as Cyprian declared—“like going to be hanged.”

He felt it very much at first, poor boy! grew quite thin and white, and could never look at Dorcas without the tears coming into his eyes. But by-and-by the excitement of preparation comforted him a little. He became such an important person in his little circle, and even in the town, where seldom such a thing was heard of as a young man “going out to India.” Even his outfit created a secondary interest, and also his trunks—which the shop-keeper exhibited at the door, marked in white letters “Cyprian Hall, Esq., Calcutta.” There was a

pleasant and consolatory side even to this cruel parting.

"But it shall not be for long, that I am determined on," said Cyprian, with great energy. "As soon as ever I am settled, I will send out for Dor, and we will live together, bachelor brother and maiden sister, and be as happy as the day is long—won't we, 'little mother?'"

She half-smiled, half-sobbed at the word. "Cyprian always sees the bright side of things; and he is right. Don't you think so, Miss Waldershare?"

"Yes," answered the elder woman, but thought also how little *he* thought who it was that had invariably made life turn its sunny side to him, if possible, even though somebody else had to walk in the shade.

So much so that even the last day was not such a very dreary day at the Terrace, where Miss Waldershare paid her final call at least forty-eight hours before Cyprian's departure. With her constitutional shyness, she thought it best not to stay till the very end, not being a relative, nor exactly a "friend of the family." And, judging by herself, she considered that, after the two were really gone—Mr. Moffat was to see the poor fellow off from Liverpool, and then come back, *en route* for Oxford, with the

latest news—after that it would be easier for Dorcas to be left quite alone.

Therefore, she bade the twins a cheerful good-bye, reminded them both how young they were, and how the world was all before them, and their lot in their own hands, to do what they liked with it, almost; for at twenty, with health, strength, work to do, and the capacity and will to do it, what young man or young woman need feel hopeless or forlorn? She “preached” a little, yet feeling all the while how vain “preaching” is, and how each young soul must buy its own experience in its own way.

And then she kissed and blessed them both—poor young things!—now going through the sharpest experience of their existence, and feeling their anguish with all the passionate intensity of youth, to whom every sorrow appears, at the time, like a sorrow eternal.

She understood this—and them: the solitary woman to whom life was no longer a vista of the future, but a dream of the past. And then she went away, walking rather slowly and sadly, and trying hard to believe all the hopeful things she had been saying a few minutes before to both Cyprian and Dorcas, when she was overtaken by a quick footstep. It was Mr. Moffat's.

“Allow me to walk home with you,” he said.

"Oh!" seeing she hesitated, "that is no matter. They don't want me."

A fact which Miss Waldershare could not deny—which, indeed, she had noticed, and been almost sorry for: feeling that the twins did not half appreciate the kindness of a friend so much older than themselves, and so familiar that they both took his devotion for granted. But she, who knew the world better, respected it as a thing only too rare.

He walked on beside her, talking a good deal about them both, or rather about Cyprian. He did not seem to consider Dorcas as a person to be discussed at all—not even her sorrow, which she bore so silently that her friends instinctively were silent too.

"Do you think there is the making of a man in that boy?" said Miss Waldershare, at last, when they stood face to face at the hotel door.

"I hope there is—I think there is—if only he falls into good hands. There are some people, you know, who make themselves and their career; others are made by circumstances or influences. It remains to be seen under what category we may place Cyprian Hall."

"And Dorcas?" said Miss Waldershare, looking fixedly in the eyes of the good, honest man—a curious, penetrating, half-sad, but exceedingly tender

look, not unbefitting a kind old woman who had once been young.

Mr. Moffat's sallow face blushed all over, but he unhesitatingly returned the gaze.

"Dorcas cares more for that boy's little finger than for any one alive. I know that. Still, I shall take care of her. I am a poor man—a very poor man—but I shall manage somehow to take care of her."

"I believe that," was the cordial answer. "God bless you. Good-bye."

Six months after this, business again called Miss Waldershare to her native town, and of course she went at once to the Terrace to see Dorcas Hall. Only to look at her, having already heard by letter all the news of Cyprian; exceedingly good news, so that she was hardly surprised at the gentle content of his sister's face, and the more than usually hopeful tone in which Dorcas spoke of him and of everything.

"Papa"—that long invisible, seldom-named father—had been quite glad to see his eldest son; he was growing elderly, with a lot of young children. Cyprian might become of the greatest use to him. Cyprian had taken kindly to business, found it rather "amusing" than otherwise, and liked the gay Calcutta life, where, no doubt, he was as great a fa-

vorite as he had always been everywhere. He was poor, certainly, for his father only allowed him a clerk's salary, probably all he deserved at first, but he hoped to "make it do," and to earn more by-and-by.

"And what does he plan about bringing you out to him? You must have a dull life here with Miss Moffat, and he knows it. What does he say?"

"Nothing," answered the sister, casting down her eyes. Then, suddenly, in the old apologetic way, "I did not expect anything else. Cyprian used to leave me to do all the planning. He is content with the present. He never looks ahead in any way. I know that."

"But, surely, as soon as he can, he will send for you or fetch you?"

Dorcas again cast down her eyes, and a vivid blush overspread her face.

"Perhaps—Mr. Moffat might not quite like me to go."

PART III.

THIRTY YEARS OLD.

THE second decade of Miss Waldershare's acquaintance with the twin brother and sister differed a little from the first one. It flew faster—years do fly much faster between twenty and thirty than between ten and twenty. How then must it be between fifty-five and sixty-five?—which she was now: no longer an “elderly,” but an old lady.

A fact which she had at last learned patiently to recognize. Like other active, energetic, and unselfish women, she had resisted fate to the last; maintained her youth and her bright-heartedness; refused to succumb to many a cruel shock; resolved to “die with harness on her back.” But the wear and tear of life gradually overcame her. After one bad illness she suddenly found out that she could not revive as heretofore—that she had grown, to all intents and purposes, an old woman.

After that she had to learn to be quiet, to let others do her work instead of doing it all herself; content if she were still the head, though not the hands

as well; and more than content, thankful, to see the young rising up to do her duties for her, and to work in her stead, against the time when her place should know her no more.

Something on this wise she wrote to her friend Dorcas Hall. For they had long become

“A pair of friends
Affectionate and true,”

in spite of the difference in their ages, and the great gaps of time that intervened between their meetings, owing to the busy life of both. But they corresponded regularly; and Dorcas's simple history, as told in her letters, became the strongest interest Miss Waldershare had. Especially so, when for this active woman all the pleasures of existence slowly dwindled down to her own house and garden; and at last, during the winter months, to the limits of four silent walls.

Dorcas's letters—they are now arranged and labelled and packed together in a box, to go some day possibly to some rightful owner; if not consigned previously, by still tenderer hands, to that safest receptacle of all treasures—the fire. They began immediately after Cyprian left for India, and were full of him and his doings. Sometimes his letters were enclosed therein—bright, clever, funny, but by no means confidential epistles, if, indeed, he had had

anything to confide, even to his "little mother." At first they came every mail, then less frequently, then they stopped entirely for a while; and Dorcas had to deaden her anxiety by the brief tidings she got of him through father and step-mother.

After that—sudden, startling news! Cyprian was married—actually married! at the age of two-and-twenty; unknown to any one, and to a girl whom nobody had ever heard of. He had met her at some hill-station—a mere child of sixteen—most charming, in spite of a slight touch of the despised Hindoo blood shining through her beautiful brown face. So said Cyprian, who had fallen madly in love, and in three weeks brought her home to Calcutta as his bride. But the father—irritated, and not without cause, at such an imprudent proceeding—turned him adrift, thus depriving him of his clerk's salary, the only income he had.

"Yet he is so clever—has so many friends—he will speedily find other work," wrote the sister, trying to look on the bright side of things. And it was so, for Cyprian seemed always to fall on his feet. But the breach between him and his father was made—and made for life.

This was Dorcas's agony; not the marriage. She forgave that. In the heart of the "little mother" jealousy—sisterly jealousy—was impossible.

“He was sure to fall in love; and to marry early was the best thing that could happen to him. I always told him so. Cyprian could never do without a woman to take care of him. Only I wish he had waited till he had just a little more money—and—I wish he had not vexed papa! For all else—look at her likeness. Isn’t it a sweet face? My pretty ‘sister!’ How could he help loving her? And after all, dear friend, don’t you think that love is best?”

Whether Miss Waldershare did or not—that Dorcas did, she knew. For James Moffat had just persuaded her to wait indefinite years, till the Fellowship he now held should result in a College living.

“We are not like Cyprian”—and her friend fancied she could almost have seen the smile, half-tender, half-amused, yet just a little sad, with which Dorcas always spoke or wrote of Cyprian—“we can wait. Papa will never need to be angry with us.” Which, indeed, was not likely, as Mr. Hall, senior, had always been too indifferent to his daughter to feel either pleasure or displeasure at any of her proceedings.

So time went on; and Dorcas still lived with Miss Moffat, upon a very small allowance apparently—for she began to supplement it in various silent ways, especially in selling her drawings, which were

remarkably good for an amateur. It was a dull life; except in the long vacation, when Mr. Moffat came to share her devoted care of his infirm old aunt, and to speculate with her on the chances of that College living which was to open all Paradise to these simple souls. But more than one living fell in, and was given to somebody else—somebody more “pushing,” or with more College influence than honest James Moffat. Year after year went by, and he was still a Fellow, and Miss Hall a spinster—travelling through her twenties as she had done through her teens—complaining to no one and troubling no one. Few even knew that she was engaged—she and James being both silent people, who preferred not to perplex any one with their affairs.

Thus she drifted on, till she had ceased to feel herself a girl any more, and one day told Miss Waldershare, with a sort of pathetic amusement, of somebody who had called her a “born old maid.” This was about the middle of the ten years. Very soon after she arrived, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, at Miss Waldershare’s door, dressed in deep mourning, looking pale and grave, but with a strange smile, not at all of hopeless misery, creeping about her mouth.

“I come to you in my trouble,” she said; “I

wanted to consult you—James would not understand—it is only a woman that would understand.”

“What—what has happened?” looking in dread at her black dress. “Not—not Cyprian?”

“No—his wife—poor Issa. She has died, and left him with twins. Think, twins—brother and sister—just like Cyprian and me!—only a month old.”

And then her self-restraint of many hours gave way, and Dorcas burst out weeping in her friend’s opened arms.

It was a very sad story, to which, elderly and prudent woman as she was, Miss Waldershare could not refuse her sympathy. Rash and foolish as the young couple had been, they had paid for their folly in keen suffering. At the last, the poor dying mother would have wanted the commonest comforts of life, but for the kindness which even strangers often show to one another in India.

“And what of the babies? Surely your father will relent now, and take the poor helpless babies?”

“N—no,” said Dorcas, looking down. “In fact, Cyprian would not have let them go. He preferred sending them, in charge of his wife’s ayah, to me.”

“To you? Good heavens!”

“Oh—you could not say I am not to take them!

My poor little babies—Cyprian's own children. Where should he have sent them except to me? I was his 'little mother,' you remember?"

"But the burden—the trouble—the expense even—in case he does not send money enough to maintain them."

"He will, or if not I can work," said Dorcas, calmly. "I do work as it is. It will be merely keeping the money here instead of sending it."

Here she stopped, blushing so violently that Miss Waldershare turned her head another way. But she had only found out a fact long guessed, that every penny the sister earned and could spare went out to the poor young couple in India.

"God bless you, my dear. If you come for my advice, it is—just follow your own. But—Mr. Moffat?"

"James is a man who always does his duty—he will never hinder me in doing mine," was the answer, given with much proud confidence.

"Well, and when do your twins arrive?"

"Cyprian put them on board a merchant vessel, in charge of the captain and his wife. They may arrive any day. Only think—me with my two babies—my dear little twins!"

"You foolish girl! and how do you intend to manage them?"

"Doesn't somebody—yourself, I think—say that any woman with common-sense and a motherly heart can soon learn how to manage a baby?"

So, caught in her own trap, Miss Waldershare ceased to look "severe," and entered heartily into the joy, almost extinguishing grief, that filled the heart of Cyprian's "little mother," in having these motherless babies to take care of. The burden of them—and Miss Waldershare foresaw how heavy it was likely to be, for willing shoulders never lack a weight—was wholly forgotten in the inexpressible pride and delight.

So the two spinsters, young and old, made every preparation for the reception of the babies, feeling as happy as children with a new doll. It was foolish, perhaps, but natural, considering the sort of women they were, women whom it often pleases Heaven to make childless, if only for the sake of the many children in this world who are, outwardly, or in reality, motherless.

And when at last the twins arrived—two poor little skinny things, with great dark eyes and brown, wizened faces, not at all like wholesome English babies—their aunt's pride in them knew no bounds. For were they not her very own flesh and blood—Cyprian's children, bearing his name? And as they began to improve in looks, they were not unlike

him—or she fancied so. Her happiness in them was something absolutely inexpressible.

And when, after a month or two, the ayah sailed for India—no slight relief—she took them entirely under her own charge, and despite the forebodings of neighbors and friends, made a most capital nurse. Instead of dying, which everybody fully expected, the twins—“Miss Hall’s twins,” as they were somewhat oddly called—were, though still brown and thin, as nice, and even as pretty children as any on the Terrace—nay, in the whole town. Even old Miss Moffat was proud of “our children;” and in her second childhood rather enjoyed having the silent house filled with young voices and the sound of pattering feet. Especially as, being thoroughly healthy, happy, and well cared for, the twins were almost always good. Their education, begun by their aunt at two months old, and never intrusted to any one but herself, was certainly no failure, as many a grave matron had prognosticated it would be, in smiling over the proverbial perfection of “old maids’ children.”

“Trouble?” wrote Dorcas, in answer to some questions of Miss Waldershare’s—“the poor little things are no trouble at all. I never amuse them—I teach them to amuse themselves. ‘Two kittens and a ball of worsted’—the grand remedy for low

spirits—why *my* ‘kittens’ are far the best, and they never hinder work” (the work which she now owned had become vitally necessary). “‘Auntie busy—must not interrupt auntie,’ they say, settle together in a corner of my painting-room—their ‘den’ we call it, and there they play together for hours. I keep an eye—or half an eye—upon them, and that is all; they never trouble me. They are such good little children.”

It did occur to Miss Waldershare that a good nurse generally makes good children, and that those who complain of unruly ones might often, if they looked within, find better cause to complain of themselves. But she said nothing. There is a common but shrewd proverb, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating,” and certainly no one could see the merry, wholesome, easily managed children and their contented aunt, and not feel that, however she did it, she contrived to make both them and herself thoroughly happy, without interfering with the happiness of anybody else. Even Mr. Moffat, though at first a trifle jealous, soon became quite satisfied. For he saw her satisfied; with her heart full of love, and her life full of duties, which, though not always easy, were always sweet.

And Cyprian?—

Cyprian’s letters—which Miss Waldershare some-

times got a sight of—were clever and charming as ever, and became gradually less and less sad. He was not of the temperament that grieves eternally, even for a lost wife. And presently he found plenty of work to do; though it was hard work, and such small pay, Dorcas said, that it was “fortunate” she herself was able to maintain the twins entirely. Dressed very plainly, and brought up simply, they were yet children whom any father might be proud of; and so would their father be, she hoped, when he came home.

“Papa’s coming home,”—the ideal “papa” whom the twins were constantly told of, and taught to believe in with a passionate admiration, as soon as their little minds could take in anything—was now the dream of Dorcas’s life.

“If I could see him once again!—give his children into his arms, and watch him with them—he used to be so fond of children, and such a favorite with them, as he was with everybody. It is very hard for him to be parted from his pretty twins—many things have been very hard for him; but I think all is brightening. He is much better off now than he was. Poor Cyprian!”

In spite of the advancing prosperity, which showed itself, if not in regular payments, in very valuable Indian presents to herself and the children—

she still called him "poor Cyprian!" But—it was a curious fact—she never by any chance called Mr. Moffat "poor James!"

No, not though he worked hard and had few pleasures; his Fellowship barely gave him enough to live on, and the College living still hung afar off "in the clouds." But he trusted Dorcas and she trusted him; they wrote constantly and met occasionally, whenever they could. And what is it that makes happiness? I think, not prosperity; not even the attainment of all one wishes, but the power of enjoying what one has. A clean heart, a quiet conscience, a loving and faithful soul—these, in spite of outward circumstances, will create a happy, at least a not unhappy life. Therefore, I refuse to consider James Moffat and Dorcas Hall altogether miserable.

Miss Waldershare, seeing this, ceased to be needlessly miserable concerning them. In truth, as the years slipped by, her restless anxiety over those she loved somewhat abated. She learned to trust Heaven a little more, and herself a little less; to believe that the Father above would take care of her dear ones as well as she could—possibly a little better. Therefore, though she and Dorcas, tied by many duties, seldom met face to face, still she rested content about her friend; until one day, when,

to her great surprise, she got a letter from Cyprian.

"I am not quite easy concerning my sister," he wrote; "and would be grateful to you to tell me exactly how she is. She rarely speaks of herself, but now she owns to being 'not strong;' and is very anxious that I should come home. Why? She is young still—we are not thirty yet"—that half-comical, yet infinitely pathetic "we" of twins. "But if her health is really failing, what should I do? Who would take care of my children? I trust to you, her faithful friend, to tell me the exact truth concerning her."

Which, having exerted all her small strength in a four-days' visit to Dorcas, Miss Waldershare did.

"I do not consider your sister 'failing,'" was the letter that went out to Calcutta by the next mail, "but she is naturally delicate, and she has had a hard life. Two children to bring up—first to earn the money, and then spend it" (Miss Waldershare could be severely candid when she thought right), "a feeble old lady to take charge of, and the anxiety of a doubtful future; being torn in two, as it were—for when Mr. Moffat does get the living, which is promised him, and seems very near now—what is she to do? No man likes to enter on married life burdened with another man's children. Yes, my

dear Cyprian, though not failing now, she may fail. I do think it would be right and best for you to come home."

Having written thus strongly, and without delay—for she felt these things ought to be said, and who was there to say them but herself?—Miss Waldershare was a long time before she heard any further. For, shortly afterwards, she fell ill, and lingered weeks and months in that sort of semi-existence when everything but the things close at hand seems to grow dim, and she began to understand clearer how, by-and-by, the outside world and all its interests might fade away from her altogether, almost without pain.

She had been a little surprised that Dorcas Hall never came to see her, never offered to come; though writing regularly, and telling all the news about everybody, except herself. But these letters, so sweet and cheerful, as well as punctual, took away all suspicion that anything was wrong.

More especially as each letter brought brighter tidings. Mr. Moffat had at last got the expected living, in Derbyshire, such a pretty neighborhood and a prettier parsonage—everything they could both desire. And Cyprian was coming home—they hoped in time for the marriage. Also, not alone. The twins would have to welcome not only

their unknown father, but a step-mother—young, and by her letters, very sweet and good.

This last piece of news Dorcas communicated by word of mouth, waiting beside Miss Waldershare at the station, whither, on her way to Buxton Baths, the invalid had begged to be met. By a battalion, as it turned out; Mr. Moffat, Dorcas, and the little twins, now growing quite big children.

“I have told them they must learn to say ‘mamma,’ and that they are sure to love her. I was not surprised—indeed, I was quite glad,” she added. “Cyprian needed a wife so much, and he has waited a long time.”

“Yes, six years *is* a long time, and men don’t like waiting,” said Miss Waldershare, rather satirically. “There is almost no such thing as a faithful man.”

“Except James,” said Dorcas, gently, as she held out her hand to him with a smile. To the end of her days Miss Waldershare will never forget that look and that smile.

Somewhat to her friend’s surprise, Dorcas never referred to the question as to what was to be done with the twins when their father came home, or after he went back to India again. Nor did she speak much of her own future, scarcely of the future at all. She seemed quite absorbed in the happy present.

"Only to think, in one week Cyprian will be at home! After ten years—ten long anxious years. He will look quite middle-aged, I dare say. I shall hardly know him—or he me. Oh yes, we shall—we shall! And I shall show him his children, just like what he and I were in the days when I was his 'little mother.' Do you remember?"

Miss Waldershare did remember; and thought, irradiated by this wonderful flood of joy, Dorcas, pale and thin as she was, looked almost like the little Dorcas of the children's tea-party, so many years ago. They spoke of it—and of heaps of other things—spending a most merry hour together: till at last the train started, and Miss Waldershare caught her last glimpse of the little group standing as they would so soon stand on Southampton Quay—Dorcas with her two children, one in each hand—waiting for the ship with "papa" on board.

After that day, for more than ten days she heard nothing of the Halls. She thought, perhaps, they were too happy to remember her, and, being very suffering herself, was almost glad. When just making up her mind to write and say so, in the tenderest and least obtrusive way, she took up a two-days-old *Times*, and there read, in that fatal column which we often glance over so idly—as being no concern of ours—the "Deaths."

"On the 24th, very suddenly, aged thirty years, Miss Dorcas Hall."

That same day a letter from James Moffat, brief and subdued, full of the quiet grief of one who knows he has half a lifetime still to work and to grieve in, explained everything.

People have died of joy, it is said: if any one ever did so die, it was surely Dorcas Hall.

As they found out afterwards, she had been ailing for some time, but said nothing; and had even supported, with a marvellous courage, five days of killing suspense, when the Indian mail became overdue; and there were vague reports of some terrible disaster having happened in the Red Sea. But on the sixth day there came a telegram from Southampton, from Cyprian: "*Arrived safe and well; shall be with you this evening.*"

It was too much. Uttering a cry, almost a shriek, of joy, she clasped her hands in thankfulness, then put them suddenly to her heart. In a moment, without a word or moan, with the smile still on her lips, and the telegram grasped in her fingers, Dorcas was "away." She had

"Taken up her crown and gone home,"

according to a sweet childish song—American and negro—which she was fond of singing to her little

twins. All that day and night it rang in Miss Waldershare's half-stunned brain,

"She has taken up her crown and gone home,
And the angels are waiting at the door."

But—poor Cyprian. Feeble as she was, the very next day Miss Waldershare put herself in the train, and went to see Cyprian.

The Terrace looked exactly as usual; just as it had done twenty years before, when she went to the children's tea-party. Old Miss Moffat sat at the open window, basking in the summer sunshine, in her peaceful second childhood. There were no blinds down, of course; all had happened a week ago; they had resumed that old life—Dorcas was quite—quite "away."

Miss Waldershare was shown into the drawing-room, where sat writing a tall, handsome, bearded man—farther off a lady, very sweet looking, was trying to amuse two children—*her* children.

"We try to make them happy, and we shall succeed by-and-by," said Cyprian, after the first bitter half-hour. "They are our own dear children."

"And such good children," added Cyprian's wife. "I never saw such good children."

"It is all her doing," the father exclaimed. "You knew what she was; and what she was to me, even when we were no older than these twins. They

will never forget her—nor I. She has done everything for me all my life; and now when I might have done something for her—”

“God has done it differently,” said Miss Waldershare, laying her hand on the shoulder of the big, strong man, who had sunk down sobbing like a baby. “Be content. He knows best.”

“I believe that. But oh! my ‘little mother’—my ‘little mother!’”

POOR PRIN

A TRUE STORY

POOR PRIN:

A TRUE STORY.

SHE is a very good woman, one of the best women I have ever known, in her own—nay, in any—rank of life. A “woman” or a “lady?” some inquisitive precocious young people may ask. Well, I shall not attempt to decide the mighty difference. All I can say is, that I often sit at dinner with “ladies,” resplendent in velvet and diamonds, with whom I should much less enjoy spending an hour, for they have not one half her intelligence, refinement of nature, or singleness of heart.

She told me the following story, quite incidentally, one Sunday evening, when she, her little girl—she is a widow—and my own child were all sitting together, amusing themselves with books and games. Whether Sunday books and Sunday games I cannot say, having a strong aversion to such distinctions, and believing that they who earnestly desire to sanctify the whole week need have no fear of secularizing Sunday.

Therefore, coming suddenly into the room, and finding the whole party laughing merrily together, I was not at all scandalized, but pleased ; considerably amused, too, to see how, besides the books and the pictures, they had collected round them quite a congregation of animals—four generations of cats, from the old grandmother—a beautiful and most respectable tabby—down to Tommy, who was saved out of our last family or families (we had nine kittens in two days), because he was all black with two white feet, likely to grow up as remarkable and demoniacal an animal as the cat noted in the story of “Mephistopheles and Faust.” At present, however, he is the most innocent of fat kittens—almost too fat to stand ; for, when he tries to balance himself on three legs, and wash his face with the fourth, he almost invariably topples over, to the great delight of the children.

He was thus occupied, his mother sedately watching him, his aunt ditto, and his sister—it is impossible to recollect accurately their feline relationship—lying fast asleep in her favorite place of repose—the broad back of old Rose. Poor old Rose ! once young and thin as her little mistress—the two are exactly the same age. But dog life and human life are different ; long before the child is a woman, Rose will have gone to another—dare I say a better?—

world. Will she have another existence? I should not like absolutely to decide "No." Her nature, like many dog natures, will bear contrasting with that of not a few human beings. Her faithfulness, her lovingness, are beyond telling; and though she is now as broad almost as she is long, not active, and anything but beautiful, she is happy still; for she is the pet of the house, and it is a common saying that, when she dies, all the family will go into mourning for Rose.

Poor old Rose! She is not a valuable dog—only a waif and stray. A laborer's wife, who had heard of our taking in a forlorn kitten, brought her to our door. "Ma'am, I can't afford to keep her, and if you don't have her, I shall just drown her, like the kitten." So we took Rose in too, and she and the white kitten, also saved, became the best of friends to one another and the best of playfellows in the nursery. I can still see with shut eyes the prettiest of pictures—kitten, dog, and child, all asleep together before the winter fire, the yellow hair lying on Rose's silky brown ears, and White Pussy—she never had any other name—curled up close in the soft fat arms. Alas, poor Pussy! she came to a premature end from some mysterious poison; but Rose lived and flourished, and has been an important member of our family for nearly eleven years.

"Yes," said that excellent woman of whom I have spoken, and whom I will call Mrs. Jane; "no wonder you are all so fond of Rose. She is a dear old dog, so very gentle with children." (Indeed, there is a tradition that once a baby's hand was put right into her mouth, and Rose never bit it!) "She must have been a pretty dog once, with her spaniel ears and soft spaniel eyes. Scotch terriers are all the fashion now, but for my part I always like a spaniel. Ah! my poor little Prin was a spaniel."

"Who was Prin?" cried the eager voice of Rose's child-mistress, always ready to hear anything about animals, and having an unlimited capacity of maternal tenderness over all young and helpless things.

"Prin, my dear, was a dog I had when I was a little girl about as old as you. I loved him, oh! I loved him!"

Struck by the unwonted pathos of the tone, I turned round, and saw that Mrs. Jane's eyes were full of tears.

"What sort of a dog was he?"

"A spaniel, as I said, but small—not near so big as Rose. I could carry him in my arms long after he was a puppy. I must have been about eleven when grandfather gave him to me."

"And did you have him many years?" was the child's inquiry. "Did he live to be very old? or even as old as my Rose?"

"No, he died quite young."

"How did he die?"

"I drowned him."

"Drowned him!" with an astonished, even horrified look.

"Yes, I drowned him. I did it my own self. You would not think it of me, my dear. Yet I was not a cruel girl. And I loved him; oh! how I loved him!"

Her tears flowed fast now; her voice actually broke with emotion. The children were quite silent. For me, I could not help putting a question or so, in order to come to the truth of things; and the result seemed to me so infinitely pathetic—so true to nature, and yet elucidating more than one mysterious apparent contradiction in nature—that I asked permission to write it down—to "make a story of it," in short. A sad story I own it is; and yet there is a sweetness about it as about many another sad story. Much as we wish our children to be happy, can we, should we, wholly eliminate from their lives the sense of pain—sacred pain? Else, may they not come one day to show that saddest cowardice, the helpless shrinking from the sight of

suffering—a quality pitiful in a man, in a woman more than pitiful—fatal.

“I don’t like pain,” said to me once one of the bravest and most enduring of all the people I ever knew. No, nobody likes it; but everybody must learn to face it for himself and others. And there is such a thing as heroic pain, sympathetic pain, pain which almost does one good. Therefore, I shall not apologize for telling this, which I own is a rather painful story.

“My poor little Prin! I can scarcely bear to speak of him even now,” said Mrs. Jane, wiping her eyes. “But if these children particularly wish to hear, I’ll tell them. It is not likely to do them any harm, and it is a real, true story.”

What child does not delight in “a real, true story,” especially if it happened to the teller of it when he or she was young? The two little girls forsook their cats, and listened with eager eyes. So did I. I could not help it. The narrative was so pathetic in its exceeding simplicity, so utterly unconscious that it was touching the heights and depths of utmost tragedy, that which Art vainly struggles after and Nature continually attains.

“Yes. Prin was my grandfather’s gift to me, and one of the dearest little dogs that any child ever had for pet and playfellow. A clever dog, too, as

well as I can remember ; but what I remember most is his goodness and affectionateness. He was good with everybody, but especially good with me. There is a saying—

“‘ A woman, a spaniel, and a walnut-tree,
The more you whip 'em the better they be,’

but Prin was good without any whipping. He didn't deserve punishment, and he never got it. He never got anything but love in all his life—his happy little life. That is my consolation now.”

She choked down one last sob, poor dear woman, and went on.

“Prin was almost the only companion I had, for my big brother was many years older than I, and my little brother was not yet born. We were a quiet family, mother and I being often left alone for days together, while father and Jem went off with the barge. Father was captain of one of those barges which trade between Chatham and Tunbridge on the River Medway, and we lived in a village on the riverside, half-way between those towns.

“I have heard say there is no lovelier country in all England than that which lies along the banks of the Medway, and I can well believe it. Children seldom notice scenery much—nor grown-up persons, for that matter, unless they have been educated. They may live in the very prettiest places and never

know it. But I am sure our village was pretty, and I remember—as a sort of a dream—how delightful it was to drift along in father's barge on a summer's morning, and be dropped, with another girl or two, on some quiet meadow, where we were left, with a basket of provisions, for the whole long day, and picked up by some returning barge at night. What a delicious time it was! Often even now, I can hear the larks singing, and smell the cowslips, and see the white clouds flying over the blue sky. No living creatures could be happier than we little girls were—except Prin.

“We always took Prin with us—indeed, I never went anywhere without Prin, except to school and to church—and even there he always trotted with me part of the way, and then trotted respectably home again. Very often he came to meet me at dinner-time—he knew the hour quite well. He certainly knew my father's hour of coming home, and generally went to meet him too, a little way down the lane. He was a most polite little dog, and never omitted to go up and make his bow—that is, wag his tail—to every member of the family, whether they noticed him or not. Even, as I observe, Rose always does to your mamma, though she doesn't care for dogs, and never pays her any attention.” (Contritely I owned this, offering my humble tribute to

Rose's unrequited affection. But what can one do? One can't love everybody, and I am sure I am never unkind to her.)

"No, ma'am, and my father was never unkind to Prin. But he was a busy man, who did not care much for dogs or children. He was very good to me, especially when I grew older, though while I was little I generally kept out of his way. My mother, too—she did not trouble herself much about Prin—never talked to him or petted him. It was only I who loved him—and oh! how I loved him! While he was a puppy he almost lived in my arms, and when he grew up he was beside me all day long, and slept at night on my bed; he was as good as a blanket—he kept my feet so warm.

"‘There goes Jane, with her dog at her heels,’ the family used to say, ‘Jane and Prin’—‘Prin and Jane’—the two names seemed to run together, naturally, as we did ourselves.

"He was, as I said, my only playfellow, though there were two girls I rather liked as schoolfellows, Emily at the grocer's shop, and Fanny the butcher's daughter. Emily was a great strong girl, but Fanny was weak and sickly. She had no mother, only a lot of rough brothers, who were not very kind to her. These boys, indeed, were my especial terror, and the terror of the whole village. They hunted

the cats, shot the birds, teased the children, and were particularly cruel to the dogs. I once saw the biggest of them hold up a wretched half-starved cur by the tail till it literally howled with pain, and the impression of the sight never left my mind.

“Ever afterwards, when I saw one of these boys in the distance, I used to snatch up my Prin, and hide him under my pinafore. I think he himself almost understood the reason why, for he would cuddle up to me, and lie quite still, not uttering a single bow-wow till the enemy had gone by. Perhaps some other dog, who had been ill-used by those brutal boys, had warned him against them. I often think dogs do talk to one another, or, at least, manage to make one another understand things in a way that we cannot understand at all.

“Well, as I said, Prin had grown up, and I had grown to be a girl of eleven; but we were still happy together—as happy as the day was long—and the days were very long just then; for I remember it was the middle of summer. One unlucky night my father, coming in tired and hot, happened to stumble over Prin, who was lying asleep on the door-mat—

“‘What’s that good-for-nothing brute doing there?’ said he. ‘As if I hadn’t mouths enough to fill—let alone a dog’s! and we shall be fined for

him, too; for it's getting nigh the dog-days, and we haven't paid the tax. Missis'—he always called my mother 'Missis'—'cannot you get rid of him somehow before Cleaver finds him out?'

"'He's the child's pet; and he does nobody any harm,' said my mother. 'Get away, Prin.'

"She gave him a little kick, not meaning any unkindness; but he wasn't used to it, and uttered a feeble howl.

"'Stop that noise, or I'll make you,' said my father angrily.

"I snatched up Prin. I almost smothered him in my pinafore.

"'No, indeed, father; he does nobody any harm. And he eats very little—not nearly so much as I do.'

"'I should hope not! that would be too good a joke. But, little or much, he won't do it for long.'

"I looked up in alarm.

"'No, child; I can't pay the dog-tax: and they've grown very strict about it lately. Besides, it's a sin and a shame to have to feed a dog that eats as much as a child. Make up your mind—Prin must go.'

"Poor father! he must have been very much vexed about something—something which I could not in the least understand—or he would not have spoken so sharply. And he turned away, not hav-

ing the slightest idea, I am sure, of the effect his words had upon me.

“Grown-up people do often vent their irritation upon children in that way: they ought not to do it; but they do. They have so much to try them which children cannot take in. My parents had, as I afterwards found out; and it helped me to make excuses for my father.

“He was no better next morning; he seemed to have ‘got up on the wrong side of the bed,’ as people say; and when I anxiously asked about poor Prin—for I had lain awake half the night thinking about him—he gave me a sharp answer.

“‘No, Jane.’ I knew he was very cross, or he would not have called me Jane, but Jenny. ‘I can’t keep a dog, and I won’t. Missis, when Cleaver comes round, tell him we can’t afford to pay the tax; and don’t mean to.’

“‘And what’s to happen then?’ asked my mother; for I was dumb with fear.

“‘Oh! I suppose he’ll take the dog and make away with him—give him to his boys perhaps.’

“I shuddered; for Cleaver was the butcher, whose poor little daughter was my friend, and her brothers my most dreaded enemies—the cruel lads whom all the village was afraid of.

“‘Oh, father—please, father!’ I began, running

after him in an agony of entreaty. But my mother called me back.

“‘Father’s got quite enough to bother him without you. Can’t you see that he’s best let alone?’

“So I did let him alone, and only sat in a corner crying quietly, with Prin on my lap, hid under my pinafore, raising himself now and then to put a paw on my shoulder, or lick my cheek, as he always did when he thought I was unhappy. We sat together, until mother told me it was time to get ready for school.

“How I managed to do my lessons that day, and the following, when my father was away with the barge, I cannot tell. I must have gone on in a sort of dream; for I know Prin was never out of my head the whole time. I thought and thought—planning every conceivable way to get out of the difficulty—but could find none. I spoke to none of my schoolfellows about it; indeed, I scarcely said a word to any one, except asking Fanny Cleaver if her father really had to collect the dog-tax, and what would he do when he could not get the money? To which she answered, as she did to most things—poor little broken-down creature—‘that she didn’t know.’

“Mother, too—when I put to her the same question—gave me the same reply; but quite carelessly.

She had heaps to do and to think of. Prin was of no importance to her. But to me—

“I have sometimes heard children say of a cat, a dog, or a horse, that they loved it ‘like a person;’ and I think a child who takes a fancy to some special animal, puts into this love a special tenderness almost maternal; the dumbness, the helplessness of the creature possibly arouses it—but whatever it is, the feeling is very strong—stronger than grown people have any idea of.

“All these two days, during the hours I was at home I never let Prin out of my sight, and when I went to school I locked him up in a tool-house we had at the bottom of the garden, where nobody would be likely to hear him bark. Though he did not bark much, but seemed quite to understand that he was to lie concealed and must keep quiet. I took the tool-house key away in my pocket, and felt at it, for consolation, during all the time I was saying my lessons, else I think I must fairly have run away home. To be absent all these hours, not knowing what was happening to Prin in my absence, would have been an agony greater than I could bear.

“When I got home I took him away with me into the wood behind our house, and there, while he played merrily about, hunted rabbits, and barked at

big bumble-bees, I thought and thought, till I was sick with thinking.

“What was I to do? I could not pay the tax. I had no money, and nothing to sell except my clothes, and if I did that my mother would have been very angry. Otherwise, oh! I could have gone barefoot or with scarcely a rag to my back, rather than part with my poor little Prin!

“He seemed to understand this, at any rate to know that something was wrong with me. Never had he hung after my heels so close, never jumped up and kissed me so often, as during those three dreadful days.

“It was three days now, my father was to come home that night, and he came.

“He had evidently forgotten all about his annoyance, and all about Prin, whom I hid under my pinafore till I saw that father was quite merry and jolly. Then I let him run about the kitchen as usual, and father said a kind word or two to him, which made me feel that all was right.

“Oh how happy I was, and how happy was Prin! I remember, as if it were yesterday, all we did that evening, how we took a walk together down the village—how he ran after the geese on the common and the ducks in the pond—he never did anything worse than run after them, being such a gentle little

dog. When we came home father was asleep on his chair by the fire, so I sat down on the stool beside him, with Prin on my lap, who very soon went to sleep too.

"By-and-by father woke up, and pulled his ears, and said what a pretty dog he was.

"'You won't let him be sent away, then?' I entreated.

"Father laughed. 'Oh, that's quite another matter, my little woman. I wouldn't do it if I was rich like the squire. Suppose you ask the squire to take him—buy him, possibly, and I'll give you half the money to get yourself a new hat.'

"Sell Prin! Get myself a new hat with the money! The idea was horrible.

"'Well, well, don't cry. I hate to see little girls crying,' said father, half-vexed, half-coaxing, and I stopped at once. Then mother called me off to bed, and I had no time for another word.

"But all the old misery had come back again. I lay awake hour after hour, sobbing quietly to myself, and racking my brain as to what I was to do with Prin. *He* didn't wake—he always slept like a top—as he did that night, only once stirring, when in my miserable restlessness I moved my feet up and down, making a little sleepy bark, and settling down again, as contented as possible. He had such

a happy life—my little Prin! Happy, I am glad to think, from beginning to end.

“I woke next morning with a great weight on my heart. Father was going off again for the day, and before he went I was determined to speak. I was a good deal afraid of him, but for Prin’s sake I could dare anything.

“So I caught at his coat, after waiting till the very last minute.

“‘Father, what about Prin?’

“‘How, child? Oh, the tax—and Cleaver will be round to-morrow. He told me so.’

“‘To-morrow?’

“‘Yes, that’s the last day. He must have the money or the dog. And he won’t get the money, so the dog must go.’

“I burst out crying. ‘What shall I do? What shall I do?’

“‘Anything you like—only don’t bother me—I’m bothered enow. Sell him or give him away, or tie a stone to him, and drown him, which would get him out of all trouble anyhow. But I won’t keep him—the dog must go.’

“‘Oh, father, father!’ I entreated, hanging on to his coat-tails; but he had now got thoroughly vexed. He threw me off, and I fell with my head against the door-post. Either the blow or the grief so stu-

peffed me that I lay there ever so long, and remember nothing till I woke up with Prin licking my face and hands. I took him into my arms, and I cried, oh ! how I cried.

“Mother found me by-and-by, and sent me off to school. I suppose she thought it best for me, though she looked a little sorry.

“‘There’s no use making a fuss about the dog,’ said she; ‘what father says he means; you know that. Poor Prin’s a good little fellow,’ and she stopped to pat him. ‘But for all that it’s quite true he eats as much as a child, and he’s rather a bother. He’d better go. There’s dogs enough in the world—rather too many.’

“Perhaps, but all the other dogs were nothing to me. I had only my Prin. My heart was almost broken.

“And here I wish to say, children, that you must not think I blame either father or mother. They were very good parents to me, and neither of them meant to be unkind. Only they did not quite understand me. It often is so. And since I have been a mother myself I have prayed with all my heart, and tried with all my heart too, that I might not only love, but understand my children.

“I don’t remember much about that day. I must have said my lessons in a sort of dream—or

not said them at all, for I know I was punished, and kept in after school hours, which added to my misery, by hindering my return home. Otherwise I did not feel it—indeed, I felt nothing at all; except that this was the last day—the very last day—when I should have my poor little Prin.

“What was to become of him? Would he be taken away, and killed at once, or treated unkindly, and made so miserable that he would be better dead than alive? Every cruel act of those rough butcher-boys came into my mind. What might not happen to Prin if he fell into their hands, and I away, and ignorant of what was being done to him! The idea was agonizing.

“Somebody at a school feast once told us children a story of a lady named Griseldis—‘Patient’ Griseldis, and much praised for her patience, though I remember thinking at the time she must have been a very silly if not a very wicked woman—how she let her brutal husband take away her children one by one, as soon as they were born, and never asked him what was to become of them! Why I—I would have fought for them like a young tigress! and as for the wretch my husband, I think I should have killed him on the spot—as I would have killed Mr. Cleaver, the butcher, had I seen him ill-using my Prin.

"My poor dog—how was I to save him? My father's idea about the squire's taking him flashed across my mind. The little ladies at the Hall were fond of dogs. I might give him away to them. *He* would be safe and happy; and as for me—well, it did not much matter. I might ask permission to come and see him now and then. So I made up my mind, and ran off as fast as my legs would carry me to the Lodge gates.

"They were shut, and the gardener's wife told me the family had just gone abroad for six months. So my last hope failed.

"There was no one else to give him to. Not a soul in our long village was rich enough to keep him, or pay the tax for him. Evidently my poor Prin was—like many another creature—one too many in this sorrowful world. Yet he looked so happy—so unconscious—frisking about merrily in the hay-fields we passed through; perfectly content with the present, and fearless of the future—having never in all his life known any ill-treatment. And now?

"Those Cleaver boys! The thought of them, and of Prin in their hands, nearly drove me wild. How was I to save him?

"All of a sudden my father's words—meaningless words I now know they were—came into my head.

‘Tie a stone to him and drown him. That would take him out of all trouble.’

“So it would. It should be done, and I would do it myself.

“Whether the act was wrong or right, I never stopped to think. And how I ever made up my mind to do it I could not tell then, nor can I now. I only know I did make up my mind—the one prominent thought in me being to save my Prin from suffering.

“I had heard a story of a lady, whose pet dog was dying in great pain—pain that nobody could alleviate—and the doctors said the kindest thing would be to give it prussic acid. But the creature refused everything from any hand except his mistress’s. So at last she wrapped up the dose in a bit of meat and held it out to him; he licked her hand, swallowed the merciful poison, and died. Once, I thought this tender old lady very cruel, and wondered how she had strength to do it. Now I could understand.

“No delay was possible, for had not my father said next day Cleaver was to come? Prin might be taken away quite early—even before I was up in the morning. So I must do it over night.

“But it was a dreadful thing to do alone. Suppose he should resist? Suppose he did not want to be drowned?

"I shuddered, but tried not to think. No use thinking. It *must* be done.

"Two friends only I had to go to, Emily and Fanny. Poor weak Fanny was no good, I knew; she would have told her father or her cruel big brothers; but Emily at the grocer's shop was a sensible girl, strong, brave, and trustworthy. I went to her door and asked for her, but she was gone from home. I began to cry.

"'Why do you want her so much?' asked the mother.

"'I want her to help me to drown Prin.'

"'Drown Prin? what are you thinking of, you silly child? You must have lost your head.' And she stared curiously at me. No doubt I looked very ill and strange. There was fever about, and she was the mother of many children besides Emily. She shut the door in my face, but opened it again gently. 'Emily won't be back for ever so long, my dear. Go home and ask your mother to put you to bed.'

"So all the world forsook us. We were quite without hope, Prin and I.

"It was growing dark, and I was half afraid, and yet half wishful, that he might slip from me, run away, and get himself lost. But he did not. He kept close to my heels until I took him up in my arms again, which he did not quite like, but submit-

ted. He was as gentle as a lamb with me always.

"We walked a long way—half a mile, I think it is—by the riverside, to a bridge I knew. The Medway is a large and rapid stream, and hereabouts the water ran specially fast and deep. It sparkled and glistened all rosy with the sunset. I put my hand into it, and it felt almost warm. It would not hurt him so very much to be drowned, not near so much as other things which might happen—things which I had heard were done to wretched dogs by the Cleaver boys.

"The sunset faded, the stars began to peep out, but I did not feel frightened, as I sometimes was in the dark. Indeed, I seemed to feel nothing, except the little warm, soft bundle I carried in my arms, close to my heart.

"Arrived at the bridge, I sat down, very tired, half asleep; at least it seemed like sleepiness, for all things grew indistinct to me except the one thing I had come to do. Prin was sleepy, too, for it was his natural bedtime. If only we could have gone to sleep, both together, and woke up next morning to find all was a bad dream! Or—never woke again.

"But I roused myself, for the light was going every minute, and I had to find a big stone—the biggest I could—and tie it up as tight as I possibly

could with a piece of strong cord, which I had put in my pocket.

"I had thought Prin might have given me some trouble, but he did not; he lay all the time on my lap, quite quiet; only turning once or twice to lick my hand. I fastened the cord firmly round his neck; then I took him in my arms, close and tight, and rolled on the ground in the agony of my grief. I kissed him over and over again—his back and his silky ears, and even his poor little dusty paws, as if begging him to forgive me, and then I carried him right up to the middle arch of the bridge, where the river was deepest, and the stars were shining in the water—kissed him once more, and dropped him in.

"He must have sunk at once, for except that single splash, I never heard a sound. Beyond the first minute, I am sure—quite sure—he did not suffer the smallest pain."

Mrs. Jane stopped. No one spoke; I think everybody was doing—what I am doing as I write—and perhaps my readers may be doing now.

After a long silence she finished her story.

"It was quite dark night when I got home, and my parents had been seriously anxious about me. Father was just going out to search for me, when mother called out, 'Jane's here.'

“‘Jane alone! And where’s Prin? Why didn’t Prin come and meet me to-night as usual?’ said my father, kindly.

“Then I spoke—though my voice sounded so strange it hardly seemed like mine, even to myself.

“‘Prin will never come to meet you again, father. He’s drowned.’

“‘Drowned! Who drowned him?’

“‘I did it myself. You said it would be best. It was the only way to save him from those Cleaver boys.’

“‘You did it yourself?’

“‘I wasn’t likely to let anybody else do it. Yes, I did it my own self. Off the bridge, this evening.’

“‘Oh, my poor little girl!’

“I did not notice anything very much just then, for I felt like a stone, but I did notice that he dropped back again in his arm-chair, and put his hand over his eyes. Never but that once—except on the day of mother’s funeral—did I see father cry.

“He had spoken in haste, not meaning half he said, and now that all was over, and it was too late, his grief was almost as sharp as my own. Sharper, perhaps, for he had caused mine, which, indeed, I was obliged to hide in order to comfort him a little.

“He brought me half a dozen puppies to choose

from, and would have given me any dog I liked, but I wanted none. I could never love any dog but Prin.

“And I never did, children,” continued Mrs. Jane. “Not that I blame myself much, and I have long ceased to blame my poor father. Indeed, in some sense Prin’s death was a bond between father and me; from that hour he never gave me a harsh word. And I was so very sorry for him—sorrier even than I was for myself—that it made me specially anxious to please him; indeed, I think I grew a better girl from that day forward.

“But I never was a child any more. My childish life ended when I lost Prin. And sometimes when I see a dog that puts me in mind of him, or a little girl as fond of a dog as you are of Rose, the old days come back as fresh as ever, and especially *that* day—the quiet midsummer twilight—the bridge across the Medway, with stars shining in the water—and all I suffered when I drowned my poor little Prin.

“But I loved him—oh, I loved him!” added she for the twentieth time, as she took her own child off to bed in her motherly arms, mine following with Rose in hers. And so the story was done.

Has it any moral? I fear not. I fear also it is almost too sad a story to tell to children, except for

the fact of being so literally true. Also, that considering how little love—real love—there is in the world, and how great need of it; if poor Jane erred, she may well be forgiven. At least, it may be said of her that she “loved much.”

TWO LITTLE TINKERS

A SKETCH FROM LIFE

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I.

ONCE upon a time, it matters not whether lately or long ago, there lived in the far north of Scotland two maiden ladies, whom I shall call Miss Kirk and Miss Macrae. The latter inhabited a house not more than a few centuries old, close by a ruined castle which her ancestors had built, about fifteen hundred years ago. I doubt not Miss Macrae cherished every stone of the tumble-down ruin more than the grandest palatial residence that modern hands could build. Her neighbor and friend, Miss Kirk (I choose the name advisedly, as "kirk" is Scotch for "church," and this lady was a church in herself, one of those "living epistles known and read of all men," which the New Testament speaks of)—Miss Kirk was a new-comer to the place, but allied with Miss Macrae in all good works. Unmarried and independent, with no special home duties to absorb them, these two ladies made duties

for themselves among the old and the sick, the needy and the young. Neither of them was particularly brilliant, or youthful, or beautiful, yet in both was an inexpressible and continual charm of cheerfulness, activity, energy. You could not look on their faces without noticing there the shining of that perennial happiness which, I think, only comes to busy people, and people whose business is all for others, not themselves.

These two ladies, in their water-proof cloaks and umbrellas—no sensible person ever goes out without water-proof and umbrella in Scotland—their serge or linsey skirts kilted moderately high above their strong “tacketed” boots, with their clear-cut, high-featured Highland faces, and sweet singsong Highland voices, were “a gude sicht for sair e’en,” as the Lowland proverb runs.

They were walking thus—walking and talking earnestly about their endless work—their poor, their school, and a sort of Training Home they had just started, catching a half-dozen of young waifs and strays, and trying to make them into good servants, and, finally, into good wives and mothers. The sunset was fading rosily behind the old castle, the sea, and the distant mountains; but they were too busy almost to notice it, though not too busy to notice two little figures coming up the avenue towards

them—human figures, though of the most uncivilized type of humanity, barelegged, bareheaded, fluttering in rags, through which the brown skin peeping in large holes betrayed that what was called the “frock” was the only garment—there were evidently no underclothes at all. Yet they seemed girls, and the elder must have been at least twelve or thirteen years old.

“Look,” said Miss Macrae, “these are certainly two little tinkers.”

“Tinkers,” I should explain, is the generic term for a class of wanderers common in the Highlands, and much disliked by the better sort of peasantry there. They are not gypsies, nor yet exactly what we in England call “tramps,” as they have a distinct trade, and rarely expose themselves to the lash of the law. But they live the roughest, wildest, most wandering of lives, “tinkering” pots and pans, and going about in bands, each band having attached to it one absolute idler, the “piper,” who plays his bagpipes at feasts and weddings, and is usually the most confirmed drunkard of the whole. They are “clannish,” that is, they hold together, and sometimes have a certain respect for family ties; but, on the whole, they are as uncivilized as Red Indians or Australian Bushmen. They do not even possess tents, like the gypsies, but sleep in some hill-side

cave, or beneath a whin-bush, or under the lee of some wall, just outside a town or village—which the police will not allow them to enter—while summer lasts—the short Highland summer. What they do in winter it is almost impossible to say. Sometimes they reappear, like stray swallows or bats, on mild November evenings, to beg of some kind farmer the favor of a night's lodging in his barn; and perhaps the farmer's wife will let them boil their kettle at her fire, while the farmer's bairns dance "a wee whilie" to the pipes; but then they vanish again, and no one inquires after them, no more than after the birds or the beasts—they are only "tinkers."

These little tinkers stood in the path, staring with wide eyes from under their shaggy locks, as wild as those of some young Highland bullock, and of much the same color. You would hardly have thought they belonged to the same human race, the same common womanhood, as the two Highland ladies, neatly-dressed, gentle-mannered, pleasant-voiced, who now confronted them, and from whom they seemed inclined to run away at once, only the avenue was narrow, with a steep brae on one hand and the sea on the other.

So the elder came boldly forward and began begging of the "honored leddies," in the true tinker whine.

Now Miss Macrae and Miss Kirk held the doctrine that the charity which gives money is charity in its lowest and often most harmful form. They did not put their hands into their pockets, and they listened with the calmest and hardest countenances to a long and doleful story of how the big girl and her "cousin" had "rin awa" from a bad father, the "piper" of a band of tinkers, to which, after some close questioning, the children owned they belonged.

"Very well, I hope you have told me the truth; and now perhaps I had better tell you the same—that I don't mean to give you a single half-penny."

The elder girl looked up. She had a shrewd, sharp, but not unpleasant or really bad face, and the kindly face that looked down upon her made Miss Kirk's "No" more desirable than many people's "Yes." The poor little tinker smiled.

"No, not a halfpenny," repeated the lady, with a decision that amused Miss Macrae, who knew the weakness of her friend's heart over all helpless and wretched young ragamuffins. "But if you will come with me, I'll try and help you to earn it."

"Thank you, ma'am," said the little tinker, dropping altogether the tinker whine, and speaking in her natural voice, and, while she did so, even under

her dirty face and uncombed hair, she brightened into something more like an ordinary decent "lassie." Her eyes met Miss Kirk's with a straightforward, honest, but half-entreating gaze, as if there were in the creature, semi-barbarian as she was, the instinct to look up to somebody, and she felt, somehow, she had found somebody to look up to.

"Have you been at the house, begging of any one there?" said Miss Kirk, the more sternly that she was conscious of her heart melting within her, and of a frantic wish to rescue these two, the "very tinkerest" of all her tinker protégés, as Miss Macrae afterwards told her.

"We met an auld wife, and twa lassies, that speered wha we were. Wha micht they be?" was the reply.

"That must have been mamma and the girls," said Miss Macrae, laughing at this irreverent description of her beautiful English mother, more beautiful, even in faded bloom, than any of the new generation. "I hope they gave you nothing."

"Just a bawbee."

"Well, you'll not even get that from us. We don't believe in charity, we believe in work."

"Eh?" said the tinker lassie, with a look that Miss Macrae felt, for the hundredth time, absolutely hopeless it is to begin "preaching"

to people, trying to inculcate moral or religious lessons upon poor creatures tired and dirty, wretched and cold.

"Are you hungry?" said Miss Kirk, going at once to the practical question.

"Ay, ay," replied the two little tinkers, with a look as if they could almost eat up one another or the lady either.

"Come along then, and I'll see what I can do for you."

"Take care what you do, and that you don't do too much," whispered Miss Macrae, knowing with whom she had to deal.

"I'll be very prudent," returned her friend, and immediately started back into the town hard by, with her two eccentric followers.

But the little town knew Miss Kirk and her ways. She could go anywhere or do anything. The street the tinker lassies took her to, where they said they had lodged every night, was one of the very worst streets in the place.

"Poor bairns!" she thought, and listened with indescribable pity to the coarse tinker slang which they exchanged behind her back with other bairns no older than themselves. Determined to get them out of the lodging-house, she was going to speak to the landlady of it, hanging about on the door-step,

half-drunk, when the elder girl interfered, with a business-like air.

"I've settled with the wife; ye needna gang till her. She's no gude company for a leddy." And with a slightly patronizing air, as if up to everything, she walked ahead of Miss Kirk, protecting her, as it were, till they were quite out of the noisome street, then fell behind.

For nearly an hour did the lady wander up and down the town, with her two black sheep at her heels, for no one would take them in; every decent lodging shut its door firmly against "tinker folk." It was long past her tea-time, and Miss Kirk was beginning to feel very tired. She had divided a loaf between the children, but they looked hungry still. She was thinking of giving them their tea on her own door-step—she was sure they could not be admitted further—and then going out again with them, as there would be still a brief hour before darkness came, when she suddenly called to mind an old woman, once a farmer's wife, who always spoke kindly of the tinker tribe, declaring they were not so bad as people thought them, and that she had never turned them away from her door.

The humblest of doors it was now, and the rooms within—well, they might be cleaner, but per-

haps that was all the better. No clean or tidy person could have received two such guests. Even Mrs. MacPhie hesitated, but finally gave in, and condescended to arrange a bed on the floor—an actual bed under a real blanket!

“I’ll pay for it, and for your supper too,” said Miss Kirk, as she departed. “But you must pay me back by weeding in my garden all day to-morrow. Be sure you are there by ten o’clock.”

“You don’t really expect the children will come, my dear?” said Miss Kirk’s good old aunt, as she told her the story, in apology for being so late, when they sat over their comfortable tea.

“Happy is he who expecteth nothing,” was the laughing reply. “Still, we shall see.”

And sure enough, precisely as ten o’clock struck, a little girlie appeared at the garden-gate, and, entering without asking anybody’s leave, began energetically weeding. Only one girl; and when Miss Kirk, afraid lest the tinker mind might not be able to distinguish between weeds and flowers, rushed to the rescue of her favorite border, she saw it was the elder of the two.

“Where is Mary?” (Jean and Mary, they had told her, were their names; as to surnames, they were apparently doubtful if they had ever had any).

“Ma’am, she just sleepit in” (overslept herself).

"It was such a braw bed, we both sleepit the minute we put our heads down, and the wife, she said she didna like to put us up" (call us) "in the morning. But I'm here, ma'am, and Mary, she'll no be lang o' coming."

"Did you get your porridge?"

"Ou, ay, fine!" smacking her lips and licking them, not unlike a cat after milk, or a dog with a specially nice bone. There was so much of the animal about this neglected human being.

"Poor soul!" thought the compassionate lady, but she did not allow her pity to be seen. She only explained the work that was to be done, and how she expected to find it done by dinner-time, when some more porridge should be forthcoming, if the girls wished it. Then she went out after her own business.

This was, as usual, that of other people. I think it is always the busy folk to whom other folk invariably apply for help, and somehow they always find time to give it. Miss Kirk did. One of her strongest points was that habit of arrangement which uses up odd minutes, as well as all other odd things, and so, by wasting nothing, succeeds in finding, or making, time for everything.

After a very full day, so full that she had almost forgotten her two little tinkers, she sat down to rest

in her parlor—"rest" meaning having to read and answer about a dozen letters—when she saw her cook enter with a countenance of horror.

"Ma'am, please, will you be so kind as to come? Thae tinker lassies! The little one is dancing a jig outside our very garden-gate, with a—a great multitude of people looking on."

"Well," said Miss Kirk, amused at the "high English" in which Highlanders, who learn it as a foreign language, speak, always politely, often very poetically, translating into it their native Gaelic. "Well, and what harm will that do us?"

"Harm, ma'am? They will be thought to belong to us. Our neighbors will suppose they actually live here!"

"I wish they did—if it would save them," said Miss Kirk, who, her friend Miss Macrae declared, was a terribly one-sided woman, and not to be trusted in the matter of prudence where waifs and strays were concerned. However, so great was her cook's distress that she went out to see what was really wrong.

There they were, the two young Pariahs of even that very rough society, the elder whistling, actually whistling a dance tune, and the other bounding to it like an India-rubber ball, her shaggy locks flying, her fingers snapping, and her dirty face all red with

excitement, as she gave vent to the "heughs" and "hochs" indispensable to Highland dancing, and which it is utterly hopeless to describe to any one who has never seen the like.

Round them, watching the proceedings with the utmost delight, was, scarcely a "multitude," but a merry little crowd, composed chiefly of all the young idlers—and old too—of the neighborhood.

"Stop!" said Miss Kirk, and they really did stop at that gentle but authoritative voice. "This will never do, at a lady's garden-gate. You disturb my aunt. Go away, children; and," still more kindly, "you, Jean and Mary, take the rest of your money"—a few pence merely—"go back to Mrs. MacPhie, pay her, and come to-morrow at the same hour."

She had no time to say more; besides, she did not wish—why should she? for the children were doing nothing morally wrong; it was only following out their ordinary life, and Miss Kirk had the sense always to draw a clear line between fun and wickedness. Still, she had spoken strongly enough to make her doubt if she should see anything more of her two little tinkers, who were as ignorant of any of the restraints of civilized life as beasts of the field or fowls of the air.

Next morning, however, Jean was seen diligently weeding—only Jean, not Mary. The latter being inquired after, Jean's tears sprang to her eyes.

“Deed, an’ I dinna ken whar she is. Her mither’s got her. But she told me she’d rin awa to me, if she could. The mither’s an awfu’ bad woman, to bide wi’; just sic anither as my faither.”

Evidently the commandment “Honor thy father and thy mother” had not been taught to this young person, and how difficult to teach it with such parents!

Miss Kirk turned away in silence, completely non-plussed.

More puzzling still was her position a few hours later, when little Mary, having somehow escaped from the tinker band, was again seen weeding beside Jean, both evidently quite happy and comfortable. But their comfort did not last, for very soon there appeared at the kitchen-door a third tinker lassie, only about five years old, who, in a shrill voice that nothing would silence, declared her “mither” had sent her to fetch Mary, and refused to go back without her.

Poor cook, so sensitive to public opinion, again sought her mistress, entreating her to send the young vagabonds quite away, and not disgrace the house “with the likes o’ them.” So, for peace’ sake,

Miss Kirk was obliged to let Mary go; but Jean could nowhere be found.

"She's hiding," said Mary; "she's feared for her faither."

"What is her father?"

"An ugly wee black man" (*i. e.*, dark complexioned) "that plays the pipes. He's always drunk, and he beats her. If I were Jean I'd hide too," added the child as she sullenly departed, without any expression of gratitude to Miss Kirk, except what was implied by her being so very loath to go.

After dark there came a ring at the bell—the front-door bell, not the back; evidently these tinker lasses had no shyness, no sense of awe towards superiors; and Miss Kirk, who opened the door, saw standing there a little black figure, as black as if it had just come out of the coal-hole—which it really had.

"I'm Jean. I've been hiding among the coals, hiding frae my faither. I'll no go back to him. I'd like to stop with you, or with yon other woman"—meaning Miss Macrae, who had been spending the evening, and now came behind, laughing silently at all her friend had brought upon herself by such weak tender-heartedness. Yet the trust, if inconvenient, was very touching, and the young creature standing there made no attempt at the tinker whine,

but spoke up like an honest girl, and looked right in the face of the two ladies. Neither of them attempted to scold her.

"I'm afraid to take the child into the kitchen; our servants might object," whispered Miss Kirk; "but I'll go and fetch her some food here. You'd like some supper, Jean?"

"Eh, wouldn't I," answered the poor, half-starved lassie, sitting down on the door-step, where next morning was the impression of herself and her clothes, as black as a coal, on the white stone.

Miss Kirk could do no more than feed her, like some animal impossible to admit indoors, and then send her back to Mrs. MacPhie's, with an entreaty to wash away the coal-dust and make herself as decent as she could.

"I'll try, my leddy. This was a braw gown ance; it's never been washed. I'll wash it mysel; it'll do fine," added the girl, affectionately contemplating her rags. What she was to dress in while she washed them did not seem to occur to her.

How the business was managed nobody inquired, but sure enough next morning "yon other woman," paying a visit to her friend, received a patronizing nod from the small person, whom at a little distance it was difficult to distinguish as boy or girl, still persistently weeding in Miss Kirk's garden.

"I wish I could weed her as well as she does my flower-beds," sighed that benevolent lady.

"Better pull her up entirely, like a young dandelion."

"Don't despise my pet weed. If dandelions only grew in greenhouses, we should think them the prettiest flowers imaginable."

So jested the two ladies, who always carried on their charitable works in the merriest way; they never could see the reason why good deeds and long faces should go together; and after watching Jean awhile they called her up to the door-step, and had a little conversation with her.

It was not quite easy, for they had to translate their meaning into the simplest words—Scotch, not Gaelic; Jean did not speak Gaelic, and the "tinker talk" was quite peculiar and often incomprehensible, even to these ladies, accustomed as they were to chat with the poor. But they managed to find out from Jean that she was no longer afraid of her father's catching hold of her, the band he belonged to having travelled south, and she had still hopes of Mary's escaping again and joining her here.

"They're just always fou" (drunk), "her mither and my faither, and then they beats us, and we rin awa."

What could Miss Kirk say? or even Miss Macrae,

who the hour before had argued severely upon the error of separating parent and child?

"Have you no mother, Jean?"

"Ou, ay! but she's daft. Somebody put her safe in the mad-house at Lochgilphead."

The child said this without the least feeling; no more than she had shown in speaking of her "fou" father. No sense of shame appeared in her—no idea of reverence for any human being. And yet, when she looked at Miss Kirk, and at Miss Macrae too, though she spoke of her so carelessly as "yon other woman," there came a light into her eyes and a softness into her voice. They were probably the first human beings who had ever spoken to her softly or kindly.

"What shall we do with her? How shall we get her to have the slightest awe or respect for anything or anybody?" said Miss Kirk, as the two friends walked away together.

"Bring her into the house; probably it is the first decent dwelling she has ever entered. I have often thought, watching the wretched-looking peasants of France or Italy on their knees in the beautiful cathedrals, that the beauty was a great help to their religion. I mean it must have been good for them that the only beautiful house they ever behold should be God's house. You need only to see that

the feet are washed clean—the frock was, I observed, washed till there was hardly a rag of it left. How does the girl ever make it hold together?”

“Poor lassie!” replied Miss Kirk, pondering many things in her mind, to be decided after she saw the effect produced by the invitation, which was given solemnly after the day’s work was done, and the day’s food eaten, as usual, on the door-step.

Miss Kirk’s drawing-room was simple and pretty, hung with family portraits—her grave, stately Highland grandfathers, and beautiful great-grandmothers. The tinker lassie stood and gazed upon them open-mouthed, with more interest than even she showed in the furniture, though the latter must have been her first notion of comfort and elegance.

“Is yon man deid?” she said, at last, in a sort of whisper.

“Yes, long since; a hundred years ago.”

“And yon woman—she’ll be deid too?”

“Certainly; she was my great-grandmother. You see she wears a different kind of dress from ours now.”

“Ou, ay. But oh, she’s bonnie! And thae folk,” pointing to a modern sketch of a young lady and gentleman taken on their marriage, “they’re no deid, surely?”

"No," replied Miss Kirk, smiling. "They are only growing a little old, with a young family rising up round them."

"Eh?" said Jean, only half comprehending. She heaved a deep sigh. "I wonder you like to live wi' a' thae deid faces." And without more ceremony she walked right out of the room. Half an hour after she was found sitting in her old corner at the door-step, doing nothing. Could it be possible that the poor, ignorant tinker lassie, probably for the first time in her life, was *thinking*?

II.

THE week passed by. Nobody had taken much notice of Jean, nevertheless she had gone on with her work most conscientiously, not having missed a single day. Miss Kirk's little garden looked the pattern of neatness. Also the last half-day, when there was nothing really left to do, Jean had asked permission to clean out the fowl-house. "Thae puir hennies wad be mair comfortable." And though cook hesitated much, thinking that tinkers could not be kept too far apart from hen-roosts under all circumstances, still Miss Kirk suggested that as the lassie had been scrupulously honest all the week, though she had had the free run of the place, she was not likely to turn thief on Saturday. So cook gave in, though she secretly sent Jessie, the young housemaid, to keep a careful eye on Jean's proceedings.

Now Jessie, herself little older than Jean, though already a capital little servant, had watched the tinker lassie all the week with a mixture of distrust and pity. Finally the latter triumphed.

During tea, Miss Kirk, her aunt, and Miss Macrae, holding their weekly gossip over their neighbors' affairs—would that all gossip were as innocent and benevolent!—discussed the possibility of sending Jean to church next day.

"You can't," said Miss Kirk the elder; "she would disturb the minds of half the congregation, just as if she were a Red Indian or a Hottentot. In my time nobody ever thought of going to church except in Sunday clothes."

"Couldn't we find her some? Couldn't we dress her? It would be at least as amusing as dressing a doll or a baby."

Miss Macrae's brilliant idea was caught at, and, late as it was, the ladies' ingenuity contrived, by begging and borrowing, to carry it out. Jean's toilet was all arranged, except as to her feet.

"If it is for the first time in her life, she must put on shoes and stockings," said old Miss Kirk decisively, delighted to have a finger in the pie, for age had never frozen her warm kindly heart. "I'll give her a pair of mine—nice gray wool. But as to shoes!"

"If you please, ma'am," said Jessie, in her slow Highland English, pausing at the door, kettle in hand—"if you please, there's an old pair of boots of mine. I have just bought new ones, and I do not require two pairs."

"Thank you, Jessie," said her mistress, warmly. "One pair out of two, that's a gift worth having. I wish we all gave as much to those who need it."

"Bravo, Jessie," added Miss Macrae. "May you never want at least two pairs of shoes!"

So a message was sent to Mrs. MacPhie's, desiring the tinker lassie to come up, as clean and decent as she could make herself, the first thing on Sunday morning, in order to get some new clothes, and go to church like other folk.

"Perhaps she'll not come," said Miss Kirk.

"I think she will; the new clothes will be irresistible," said Miss Macrae, as she started off under the stars for her fearless walk homeward.

What a sight it was—that toilet! at which Jessie assisted, and cook too, so infectious is example, in front of the kitchen fire after breakfast. An old gray linsey frock, a still older polka jacket of some bright blue material, a black straw hat, trimmed with red ribbon, dear old auntie's stockings, much too large, and Jessie's boots, polished till they shone like a mirror. As Jean stood in the middle of the kitchen floor, the centre of an admiring circle, she could not restrain her wonder and delight at her own appearance. She kept turning round and round like a cat after its tail, vainly trying to catch a glimpse of her own back, but failing in this, she gave her

whole attention to her feet. Very uncomfortable they must have felt, cramped up for the first time in shoes and stockings; but what will not one endure for the sake of dignity and elegance? Jean contemplated her toes with the supremest satisfaction, every now and then saying, in a meditative tone, "Aweel, aweel!" the only word she could find. But no South Sea Islander, clad for the first time in European dress, or in any dress at all, ever regarded himself with more sincere admiration.

She went to church, of course! She sat beside the good-natured pew-opener, as grave as a judge, standing or kneeling as she saw others do. Whether she had ever been inside a church before, she did not say, and nobody inquired. But she behaved perfectly well, and listened to the sermon as if she understood it all.

Still she was a very odd-looking, unchurch-like figure, and more than one member of the little congregation turned and stared at her in going out.

"It will never do to have her in our Bible class," said Miss Macrae, when, church being over, the two friends were arranging their "between sermons" occupation. "All the girls would begin to laugh. Suppose we send her home to get some dinner, with orders to come back here by-and-by, in an hour, say,

when the class will be over, and we can give her a little teaching all by herself."

But long before the hour was ended a shaggy black head appeared at the school-room door, munching a lump of bread. She had snatched up the portion given her, and run back to church again as fast as she could. Her look was so eager, and at the same time so droll, that it was impossible to scold.

"We must abolish her, if that be possible, for half an hour, or we shall have our girls paying no attention to anything," said the perplexed Miss Kirk, and hurriedly established the tinker lassie at the farther end of the room, behind a safe barricade of forms, and in front of one of the pictures that hung on the wall; rough-colored prints, but still with meaning in them. The custom, too common in Sunday-schools, of sticking up isolated doctrinal texts, which no little child understands, the ladies wisely avoided, and adorned their room chiefly with pretty pictures, comprehensible to the meanest capacity. This one, of the Good Shepherd, carrying a little wounded lamb in his arms, seemed to attract even the poor ignorant tinker lassie. When the Bible class was dismissed, Miss Kirk found Jean standing gazing at it with the nearest approach to reverence, nay, awe, that she had yet seen on that wild little face.

"Who is that?" asked the lady.

“I ken. It’s the Saviour—my Saviour.”

Very much surprised, Miss Kirk asked her how she came to know, and found that a year or two ago some lady had told her about Christ—how he was a “Good Shepherd” seeking and saving “that which was lost.” Jean took in the story but very vaguely; still it had touched her and fixed itself in her mind, for she could understand about sheep being lost on the Highland mountains; and, alas! she was only too like a little lost sheep herself. Somehow it seemed to dawn upon her, almost without explanation, that the Good Shepherd now and then sent people like Miss Kirk and Miss Macrae after poor girls like her and Mary, to find them and bring them home. And though in the brief lesson that followed Miss Kirk did not preach at all, only told her a few Bible stories, and explained them afterwards where she saw they were not understood, still Jean’s attention was caught, and this, probably, the first Sunday in all her life that had been spent in the least like Sunday—a rest day, a cheerful day—was not likely to be soon forgotten by her.

She went to church twice, behaving to the last with the utmost decorum. Afterwards, not knowing what to do with her, and dreading her “hanging about” idle to show her Sunday clothes, the ladies took her with them to the poor-house, where they

were in the habit of going every Sunday to read the Bible in Gaelic to the old and the sick.

"Eh! yon's a fine place," commented Jean, evidently struck by the terrible neatness of the wards, and the awful orderliness of everything. "But I wadna like to be there."

"I hope you will never go there, Jean. It's only for the old, and sick, and helpless, and you are young and strong. You must work. We mean to get you some work—farm work—the first thing on Monday morning."

But this was easier said than done. Though Jean was willing, pathetically willing, no one would employ her. It happened to be a slack season, and the ordinary farm-laborers, women and men, could scarcely find work; what chance, then, had a poor little lassie, against whom there was the strong prejudice that exists throughout the Highlands against tinkers?

The ladies were sorely puzzled what to do. Work was not to be found, and to keep the girl idle, subsisting upon charity, was impossible, or if not impossible, most harmful. It was their standing rule never to help any except the absolutely helpless; and this girl was young, strong, and able to work; able, too, to take care of herself in her own rough way. And every new thing they found out in her

made them like her better, and see what elements of good were in her, wild and untaught as she was.

To add to their perplexities, up came Mrs. MacPhie to say she could not keep the tinker lassie any longer. Not that she had anything to say against poor Jean, but her neighbors wondered at her for taking in the "likes o' them;" and Mrs. MacPhie, dirty and untidy as she might be, was sensitive as cook to public opinion. Moreover, when Miss Kirk went in the afternoon to her Training Home, the matron told her that a rumor having reached it of two little tinkers being about to be admitted there, the girls had all risen up in remonstrance—almost rebellion.

"And what did you say to them?" inquired Miss Kirk, her heart failing at the hardness of all other hearts to her poor waifs and strays.

"I asked if, supposing they were not good enough for us to have to do with them when alive, when they were dead, was God expected to find some special heaven for tinkers to go to?"

The lady smiled; but evidently, even had she intended it, the Home was not likely to suit Jean, or she it, just yet. There was too much of the wild creature in her to be happy in its restraint, even had the other girls not been bent on making her miser-

able. The sense of caste, even among outcasts, is curiously strong.

"I wonder," said Miss Macrae, as the two friends discussed the knotty point, "if the angels see as much difference between you and me and much better folk (who shall we say? Mrs. Fry and Miss Nightingale?) as our Home girls do between themselves and the tinkers."

Still, it was a difficult case, until Jean herself solved it, in her brief and determined way.

"I'll just gang to my mither at Lochgilphead."

She had never spoken before of this mother, except that she was "daft" and in the asylum there; but now her heart seemed touched.

"I'd like to see my auld mither, and there's folk there that kenned her; and maybe they'd gie me wark."

For the ladies had impressed upon her that she must work, that she must never beg any more, but try her best to be an honest girl, wear her decent clothes, and go to church in them every Sunday.

"I put great faith in her clothes," said Miss Macrae aside. "I believe even a thief is less likely to steal if he has a clean shirt on."

So they gave their consent, some good advice, and a trifle of money, just to save her from hunger on

the way, and started her on the expedition, to which in her precociously practical way the girl seemed to have made up her mind. But her heart, and she evidently had one, was sore to go. They could hardly believe the sad-eyed creature to whom they bade good-bye was the brazen-faced little tinker who had accosted them by the old castle, scarcely more than a week ago.

"Now, mind you are a good girl, Jean, and let us know how you are getting on from time to time," said Miss Kirk, slipping into her hand half a dozen directed and stamped envelopes, but rather shyly, lest Miss Macrae might laugh at her and her persistent faith in tinkers.

"On ay!" answered Jean, with her accustomed brevity, and sat down on her door-step, while the ladies passed out. But after they were gone, she suddenly started up, ran to the gate, and stood watching them down the road, as far as ever she could see them. Then she came back, took up her small bundle, in which her kind protectresses had tied up for her a few odds and ends of clothing, that her sole worldly goods should not consist, as heretofore, of the few rags she stood in, and went solitarily and silently away.

"I fear, nevertheless," said the good aunt, afterwards telling how she had observed this—"I fear,

my dear, you will hear no more of your two little tinkers."

"We shall see, auntie dear," was the reply, with that peculiar smile—I wish I could paint it!—half pathetic, half comical, which Miss Kirk's friends knew so well, and which went to the heart of her various "waifs and strays," as she called them, more than any preaching. She had faith in them, and they felt it, and it roused them to try and deserve it.

Two weeks, three weeks went by, and still no word of Jean. But one Monday morning a letter came. After that, several Monday mornings did Miss Kirk find lying on her breakfast-table a letter to herself in her own handwriting, which must have puzzled Jessie, the little housemaid, exceedingly.

They were the very oddest letters inside, always written by a different scribe, but dictated evidently by Jean herself, sometimes in the first person, sometimes the third, or else a combination of both, with additions and improvements by the amanuensis. Often it was with the greatest difficulty that Miss Kirk could make out the facts contained therein; still they were always satisfactory facts. The girl was in regular work, sometimes on one farm, sometimes another, she got enough to eat, and her

clothes were still decent: she went to church in them every Sunday.

"I told you so," remarked Miss Macrae, smiling, "vanity is at the core of all our hearts—us women! Depend upon it the great moral engine for poor Jean's reformation has been my old blue polka jacket."

Miss Kirk laughed, but there was a tear in her eye, as there often was when deciphering these eccentric compositions, which it was impossible to answer, on account of the vague address given, "Back of the Post-office," "Next door to MacGalloway the baker," and so on. The only one which bore an intelligible date was evidently the work of a much shrewder and cleverer person than poor Jean. It was well written, its sentences were carefully, even neatly turned, and—it ended in asking for money.

"That's not Jean," said Miss Kirk at once, "or if it is, it is Jean fallen under bad influence. I must write."

And she did write, without a day's delay, in printed letters, so that Jean might be able to read it herself; she could read a very little. Money the lady altogether declined to send; she was saving up a small sum to put Jean to school during winter, but until then the girl must go on working. She

enclosed more stamped envelopes, that Jean might have no excuse for drifting away from her friends, and assured her that her friends would not let go of her.

Then she waited; Miss Kirk was accustomed to wait. She never did with her benevolences as some children do with the roots they plant—dig them up to find out if they are growing.

A pause ensued, of weeks, nay, months. Miss Kirk had a great deal on hand—wide interests and work continually increasing; but still whenever people asked after her two little tinkers, and smiled the disbelieving smile—the silent “I told you so”—her kind face would sadden and her heart grow heavy. Thoughts of the Good Shepherd, who left his ninety-and-nine sheep to go after the one that was lost, often crossed her mind; and she wondered whether she had done her best, her very best, for poor Jean. Among all her heaps of letters, morn-ing after morning, she somehow looked for the one in her own writing, and grieved when it never came.

At last one did come. It contained a formal business letter from the matron of a well-known industrial school, one of those excellent institutions in which our magistrates have the right of detaining children not actually criminal, but in danger of becoming so. Miss Kirk and Miss Macrae, familiar

with all benevolent schemes, knew something of both the matron and the school.

"MADAM,—I write at the request of a girl here, Jean Anderson, or Sanderson—she seems in doubt of her own surname, so we have set her down as Anderson—who says you know her. She wishes you to be informed that she has come in here, and that she has been an honest girl, as you told her to be. Finding she could get no farm-work, as it was winter-time, she went to a magistrate, told him she had no home to go to, and was afraid of her father getting at her. He is a bad character, well known to the police. She begged to be sent here for three years, which was done. Jean Anderson seems a decent girl, and I have no reason to doubt her story; indeed, this envelope, directed in a lady's writing, seems to confirm it, but I should like to have it further confirmed by you. I have the honor to remain," etc.

"What's the letter about, my dear?" said the elder Miss Kirk, noticing that her niece laid it down with a great sigh.

"My sheep that was lost, auntie. I'll go after her at once."

It was half a day's journey, but Miss Kirk did not grudge it. When she returned home she said she should never forget the loud "Oh!" almost a sob, which she heard, on entering, from the far end of the school-room, where, amid a crowd of other girls, mostly bigger than herself, sat poor Jean, trying hard to add to her little store of learning the art of writing.

She was a good deal altered—taller and older-

looking; very thin, too, as if she had known actual hunger; but there was less of the wild animal about her, and more of the woman—the possible civilized woman. Her frock, the regulation industrial-school dress, was tidily put on; and around her neck, fashioned in the tiniest and most unnoticeable bow, was a bit of red—the identical red ribbon which had trimmed her hat on that wonderful Sunday when she first went to church like a respectable person.

She did not say much, nor Miss Kirk neither, for the girls all round were staring and listening with all their might and main; but the look in her face as her friend laid a kind hand on the girl's shoulder, and said how very glad she was to find her there, was worth coming a long way to see.

"There's twa of us here the noo," said Jean. "Hoot, lassie, dinna hide yersel'; the leddy's seen you before, ye ken."

And Miss Kirk recognized, though with difficulty, among the school-girls, Mary, her second "little tinker," the one who had danced the jig at the garden-gate, and been carried away twice by the bad mother, not to good; for, as the matron afterwards informed Miss Kirk, Mary had not asked to be sent, but had been brought there, for one of those small offences which our British law considers more the

fault of the parent than the child, and punishes by sending, not to a prison, but to an industrial school.

So both the wild creatures were caught, safe out of harm's way, and in mutual companionship, of which they seemed heartily glad. The matron said they were on the whole very good girls, though sometimes they got restless, especially in fine weather, and seemed to long to be out in the open country, free as the beasts or the birds. And Miss Kirk, as she looked on the whitewashed rooms, spotless tables and benches, and narrow windows, looking upon nothing but high blank walls, and thought of the breezy hill-side, the heathery moor, and the shining lochs, scarcely wondered at it.

But this must be. Here was a place of safety, a place to learn in, where the two little tinkers might grow up to be decent and useful members of society after all.

They are growing up still. Miss Kirk has received Jean's first letter, in answer to a good many of her own, which the matron begged her to write, saying how much better the girl behaved after receiving them. Her own production—evidently her own—is well spelt, neatly written, and, though of course very formal, contains an outburst or two, which shows that the "bread on the waters," has not been entirely thrown away.

"And what do you mean to do with your two little tinkers?" Miss Kirk's friends sometimes inquire of her in a somewhat doubtful tone.

She does not quite know, since of material so rough it is difficult to make good domestic servants, but perhaps she will try. In her own Training Home, the inmates of which once so indignantly repudiated the poor little tinkers, she takes half a dozen—only half a dozen—girls, almost as uncivilized, and makes them into good domestic servants. Possibly Jean and Mary will end in being received there. If any good Christian soul who reads this (which is, under certain nominal disguises, an absolutely true story) would like to try the experiment, they have but to apply to the author, who will help them in helping the "Two Little Tinkers," or perhaps other lost sheep, who, but for Miss Kirk and Miss Macrae might never have been found.

THE POSTMAN'S DAUGHTER

THE POSTMAN'S DAUGHTER.

ARE there not everywhere—I fear there are—children, not exactly “naughty” children, whose constant outcry is, that they “hate lessons?” Regardless of the endless anxieties—to say nothing of the endless pounds—which their parents have expended upon their education, they seem determined to learn, not as much, but as little, as they possibly can: are glad of any excuse that helps them to shirk work, and appear to consider that the whole end and aim of life is play. Poor little souls! they will soon find out their mistake! Quickly enough comes the time of all work and no play; when to please one’s self, or to amuse one’s self, is the last thing one is ever able to think of. But—a truce to preaching! Just now I only want to tell, for the benefit of all idle children, a simple little story which has lately come under my notice—a “quite true” story, though as yet a mere fragment, literally a “story without an end.” What the end may be, fate—that is, God—will prove in time; meanwhile I can do no harm,

and may do some good, especially to those lazy children aforesaid, to relate its beginning.

I arrived one afternoon, on a brief three days' visit, at a certain town in the west of England. Almost as soon as I entered, there was put into my hand, with my post letters, another, unstamped, which looked not unlike a tradesman's circular, more especially as it was addressed in a clear, clerk-like hand.

I noticed this fact, being rather particular about handwritings, as is the habit of those accustomed to read many MSS.; for most people, especially young people, hardly recognize how strong is the involuntary impression thus given: whether good or bad, careless or neat, firm or feeble. I opened the letter:

"DEAR MADAM,—Please excuse the liberty I take in writing to you, but I have been so interested in some of your books—"

I closed it abruptly. Truly, if one were given to profane jesting, one would be inclined to hope that heaven was a place where one's "works" did not follow one! Oh! the innumerable letters which we authors are in the habit of receiving, where a little eulogistic comment on our writings is followed by a reference to their own, and a petition to read them or get them printed. A young "poet" actually once asked me to publish his volume at my own

expense, adding that "posterity would reward me!" And, oh! something very like a page of verses occupied the second sheet of this letter! No wonder I shut it up with a kind of sigh, half weariness, half pity. Will these hapless rhymesters never learn that poetry—even real poetry—seldom pays? And prose scribblers, "the mob of gentlemen"—or gentlewomen (alas! too often, poor gentlewomen)—"who write with ease," and think that their facility, and their poverty, constitute an undeniable claim upon the world to read them—can these unfortunates not take in the simple truth—that really good work, soon or late, is sure to find its market—it is too rare a commodity not to be valuable; while bad work, however bolstered up by the best of introductions, if any one be so uncandid as to give them, will as certainly find its level too, and drop into its natural grave—the waste-paper basket?

Replacing the letter in its envelope, to be read when less busy, I did not think of it again for twenty-four hours.

"There was a note for you," said one of my friends next day; "the postman brought it from his little invalid daughter. She cannot stir out of doors. She thought perhaps you might come and see her."

This was quite another story. Somewhat conscience-smitten, I sought for the letter, and continued it.

—"so interested in some of your books which I have read, and so often wished to see you, that I thought perhaps if you could spare time you would not mind calling. Father, who is the postman, told me you were here.

"I am a little deformed girl, and am just recovering from a severe attack of bronchitis. I have always been fond of reading, and composing bits of poetry and prose. I enclose a little piece which I have written lately for you to see.

"Believe me to remain,

"Yours respectfully,

"E. M. H."

I will not give her name; initials will answer all the purpose. But I was touched—would not anybody have been touched?—by this simple little letter, well and neatly written, orthography and grammar quite correct—remarkably so for a girl of fifteen, as I heard she was. I know, I am sorry to say, many a girl, and boy too, of the same age, costing their parents from £100 to £200 a year for school education, who can neither write nor spell half so well as the postman's daughter.

And the poem—here it is:

"A MEMORY.

"Where the far-off mountain heights
Tower above the leaves that quiver,
Where the checkered golden lights
Shimmer on the rippling river,
Grew my flower of life's delights,
In my heart still fair as ever.

“All around, beneath, and o’er,
Silver bells, soft music ring;
Valley lilies fragrance pour,
Bird, and bee, and brooklet sing;
But my lily is no more,
She is dead, as dies the spring.

“Some day on a distant strand,
Far beyond the rolling river,
In that joy-illuminated land,
Where no sad voice whispers ‘Never,’
She will take me by the hand,
We shall live and love forever.”

Nothing very wonderful, certainly, nor original; merely the echo of other poems with which the girl was familiar, but correct in rhyme and rhythm, graceful, musical—quite equal to many verses written in albums or sung in drawing-rooms with great applause. Nay, I have known several middle-aged bards who set great store by productions not very superior to that of this child of fifteen—this “little deformed girl,” as she wrote of herself with such simple pathos. Do any of you blooming damsels of fifteen, just beginning to find out—or to wish—that you were pretty—and no harm in being pretty, if you are not conceited over what is no merit of yours—do you, can you, imagine what it would be to write of yourself deliberately that pathetic line?

Unquestionably, I must go and see her, and early next morning, which was the only time I had.

A lovely April morning; one of those days which make one feel glad to be alive. The garden was full of birds' songs, budding leaves and flowers; the familiar outlines of the high moorland beyond looked exquisitely soft and still. Thither, in another hour, we were all going,

“Beyond the blue hill's utmost rim,”

to a tiny bay, a paradise for children, where the miles and miles of bare green down and lofty cliffs dip into a hollow, in which the beating of the tide has made two arches of sea-worn rock, called the Mermaid's Cave. Already we seemed to smell the salt breeze, as it came in landward a few miles, bearing with it the scent of furzy commons and primrose lanes. And such a blue sky—such sunshine! Yes, it was, as I say, good simply to be alive.

We turned out into the fresh morning air, and went down the town to see the postman's daughter.

I do not know if she had expected us—probably she had—for, though so early in the forenoon, she was up and dressed—so far as it can be called “up” merely to move from bed to sofa. Her being “dressed,” too, was a very mild form of toilet; still she looked exceedingly neat and clean, even pretty—for she was rather pretty in face—and, alas! there

was little to notice except the face ; the poor stunted figure appeared no bigger than that of a child of ten years old, and the white, wasted hands were also unnaturally small. But the eyes, the brow—all she had of physical life seemed concentrated there.

One could quite understand now how it was that the girl wrote poetry ; how hers was one of those abnormal cases in which the mind is too large for the body—or, rather, when the mental faculties, deprived of the balance-weight of a healthy body, take refuge within themselves, and develop to an almost painful degree, often to the absolute ruin of that house of clay which may be said less to shelter than to imprison the soul.

In fine, this was obviously one of the sad stories, so common and so inexplicable, when “Why hast thou made me thus?” seems the natural outcry ; when reason sinks powerless to explain away what seems so cruelly unjust and hard, and even faith, quicker-sighted, can only accept the wonderful alleviations that sometimes come, and trust to having the mystery of it all cleared up one day. Evidently it had pleased God to give this poor girl a soul, but to put it into a body so feeble, so diseased, that how the two held together for fifteen years was a marvel. Yet her looks were neither sad nor dis-

contented ; on the contrary, the face had a remarkably placid expression, and her smile of welcome and the few words she said were equally self-possessed, gentle, and sweet.

“Yes, she had been lying there, not once out of the house, ever since Christmas—four months now. Part of that time she had suffered much (the root of her ailments was in the spine), but she did not suffer now—not, anyhow, as formerly. She was very comfortable here, even though it was a street, and the room (a respectable artisan’s parlor, about twelve feet square), was not large. But when the weather changed, she hoped to get out into the garden behind ; she had lain there a great deal last summer. The flowers beside her—yes, somebody had brought them ; she was excessively fond of flowers. And books—she read every book she could get hold of ; and she was teaching herself Latin and French ; had tried to become pupil-teacher at a school, so as to earn her own living, but had broken down in health, and been obliged to come home. Probably she had worked too hard, been too anxious, for she did not get well, as other people do, after an attack of bronchitis, but had been invalided for months. Certainly, she did sometimes feel rather tired, but people were so very kind in coming to see her,”—and so on, and so on.

All these facts, communicated, scarcely so much by the girl herself—she seemed a very silent creature—as by her mother, a delicate-looking woman, neat, respectable, and quiet, reached me vaguely, for I felt oppressed by the exceeding sadness of the whole thing, except for that which sanctifies sadness into something higher than joy—the brave endurance of an inevitable ill.

Inevitable it surely was. I saw at a glance that no earthly power could ever make this poor girl's life into a healthy life, or take from her that burden of pain which she must have borne from her cradle, never to lay down, except in that last bed from which, we believe, the spirit springs triumphant into, not rest, but the everlasting and ever joyful service of God.

Poor child, only fifteen! to be left lying here, while I, a middle-aged woman, but in perfect health and strength and capacity of enjoyment, was going with a tribe of children and young people across the green country to the beautiful sea-side, as delicious to me still as to them! Our world, it seemed limitless—but hers was condensed into one narrow room, the street outside, and a small glimpse of sky above the roofs of the opposite houses, except for that strange kingdom—"my mind to me a kingdom is"—which the poor young thing seemed to have

taken by storm, against all opposition of fate, and where, by her looks at least, she reigned in content. Her books, her needle-work, when she was too ill to study, the flowers beside her—the little MS. book which she did not offer me, nor did I propose to read—all bespoke a nature strong in itself, and capable of doing what so few of us do—making the best of things.

I said little, scarcely more than the girl herself—in fact, I could not; I felt that instead of instructing I was learning; but I promised her a few books, and gave her the advice that a wise friend—a literary lady, too—gave to me in my teens, “My dear, never mind your poetry: finish your education.”

Throughout that sweet spring day, full of a strange mixture of pleasure and pain, which it is needless to dilate upon here—across the scented moorlands, gleaming with yellow furze, and the wide green down, every mile of which was haunted with many memories, until we came out upon the long blue sea-line, calm as the eternity which rounds them all—I was followed by the thought of that helpless little figure, and placid contented face, lying in the dark corner, quite away from the sunshine, the sea-line, and the flowers.

Not altogether from these last—for one of my

young folks took her that same afternoon the most lovely handful of hyacinths, primroses, orchises, and cowslips. If only we could have gladdened her ears as well as her eyes, by wafting to her the happy cry of the cuckoo, the song of the lark and thrush, the musical beat of the waves on the beach, or the thud of the tide against the 'Mermaid's Cave! But all these delights, which so many count as nothing, yet which to one of the poetic temperament are—must be—almost everything, were to her, at present at least, denied.

But "my faith is large in time," and in that patience which, by cheerful acceptance of the sad present, sometimes opens the way to a better future. Only the wicked are God-forsaken—even in this oftentimes sorrowful world.

I went home, and turning over in my mind what could possibly be done to brighten that sad, shadowed life, and to make the most of it, for herself and for others, be it a long life or a short one, it occurred to me to send one or two of her poems, and tell her story, for the benefit of the young readers of the *Sunday Magazine*. And in order that the facts might be given as simple facts, without any imaginative gloss, I wrote for accurate information as to her brief history, which her mother had told me, but which I had listened to in a hasty, preoccu-

pied fashion, while watching, full of many thoughts, the little childish face.

This was the answer I got, enclosed in a letter from the mother. The both are worth any language of mine :

“I was fifteen on July 8th, 1876. I have been to Miss H——’s boarding-school for two and a half years, before which I had a few months at the British school in this town. In addition to geography, history, etc., I learned French and a little music. From midsummer to Christmas, 1876, I learned Latin, and taught a junior class. In December, 1876, I passed the examination of the College of Preceptors, in the first division of the third class, and received a certificate for the seven subjects on which I was examined, viz., arithmetic, grammar, geography, English history, Scripture history, French, and free-hand drawing.

“I gained three first prizes in the first class before I began to teach—one for English and two for French and English. I also received some prizes from the editor of *Kind Words*, viz., senior prize in the young author’s competition, for a poem called ‘Dreams and Realities,’ two books, and ten shillings in money, July, 1874; senior prize in handwriting competition, January, 1874; junior prize for verses for a birthday-card, October, 1874; senior prize for a poem on the ‘Sabbath,’ August, 1875.

“I also gained honorable mention in *Kind Words* for a sonnet; for handwriting (1875); for an essay on a favorite proverb; for a set of button-holes; for an historical mental picture; and for six original proverbs. In July, 1876, I had a poem called ‘Summer’ printed in *Kind Words*.
E. M. H.”

Merely this statement—bare facts, not a word more—but what a catalogue of work done! includ-

ing the admirably feminine work of the "six button-holes." What patience, what perseverance! and this in no high or even middle rank, but that of a postman's daughter! What an indomitable struggle after education in the boarding-school, probably a very small one, where the little pupil-teacher contrived, during the two and a half years, to do so much! When many girls, healthy, well-to-do young creatures, whose parents pay no end of school fees for their education, contrive to do so very little!

This girl's parents; I did not see her father, but here is what her mother says of her:

"DEAR MADAM,—My little girl herself has written the statement which you require; and as you wished for her character, I will give it to the best of my ability.

"She has always been truthful and conscientious, fond of study, and anxious to learn, and as far as I have been able to judge, during the time she was with Miss H——, won her respect and confidence, and the love of her school-fellows.

"I have always wished that she should have education enough to fit her for a teacher, for I thought it probable she would not be able to earn her living in any other way. In consequence of her spinal weakness, which she has suffered from ever since she was a twelve-month old, and for which she wears iron supports, I fear that the teaching and learning combined, during the last half year she was at school, was too great demand upon her strength, and was partly the means of bringing on the illness from which she is only just recovering.

"It will be a great grief to me if she cannot have any more edu-

cation, as she has often said, when we have talked of her future as a teacher, 'Ah, mother, if I am able I shall be a writer!' Throughout her life she has had a great deal of suffering, which she has always borne cheerfully and patiently,"

etc., etc.—(the rest is merely thanks, and need not be copied).

Both letters I have transcribed *literatim*; they are absolutely accurate as to spelling and grammar. What advantages of education the mother had, I know not; but evidently enough to appreciate and desire the like for her child; and she encloses what I conclude is the latest written poem, which I give without comment, correction, or criticism, except the reminder that the writer is still under sixteen.

“SONNET.

“Could the singer, hearing angel music sung
But give the world one thrilling, matchless strain;
Could but the poet translate unto men
The hundred whispers of his spirit's tongue;
Or could the painter's trembling, eager hand
Depict the glowing hues of earth and sky,
The beauties radiant to his soul's clear eye,
Man would not laugh and fail to understand.
But now our voiceless spirits yearn for wings
To soar beyond these stifling prison-bars
Out in the silence, out beyond the stars,
Beyond the memory of earthly things,
Where thought and fancy find an utterance free,
And all is life, and love, and liberty.”

And now, why do I tell this simple little story, of which no one can foresee the end? There have been cases—I have known several such—in which a strong, persistent, ardent soul, though imprisoned in a most feeble body, has yet managed to live on and do good work in the world, for twenty, thirty, forty years. This may be her lot; we cannot tell. But the sustaining of such a faint spark of physical life requires more care, more luxury, than her station is likely to provide her with, even if she is ever able to earn her own bread. Can anybody help her? not as charity—such a spirit is above all ordinary “charity”—but by making existence a little easier to her, till she is able to help herself. For this cause I make public her innocent little biography of fifteen years.

Also, since such a history points its own moral, and preaches better than any homily of mine, I offer it to the serious consideration of all thoughtless children—careless children—idle children—with the one brief counsel—“’Tis never too late to mend.”

Postscript.—January, 1881.

I feel it a right, and good and happy thing, to tell the sequel, so far, of this story of The Postman's Daughter—and I ought to add that her father has been postman in the same country town for thirty

years, at a salary of nine shillings and sixpence a week—who will be twenty-one this year. She lives, is likely to live. Through the *Sunday Magazine* her little history travelled far and wide, and brought to me contributions from England, Scotland, America—about twenty dollars in all for her benefit. She improved in health, and became able to take a situation as teacher in a school. There she still is, working as hard as ever, and writing better than ever—the comfort and pride of her parents—an influence and example wherever she goes.

Whether her life be long or short, she has made the very most of it, and wins that happiness which those often do win who can accept sorrow. It is a hard life still, and not without much physical suffering. But I know many a rich and prosperous young lady who is less to be envied than the Postman's Daughter.

**ABOUT
TRAVELLING AND TRAVELLERS**

ABOUT TRAVELLING AND TRAVELLERS.

“Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”

WHETHER or not the latter half of this prophecy be true, the former certainly is. Within the last quarter of a century what a change has come about in the locomotive principles—and practice—of society! All the world and his wife, to say nothing of their youthful family, have taken to travelling. Nobody now stays at home, except the sick, the old, the impecunious. And even these, when their hinderances are not quite insurmountable, make vehement efforts to follow the multitude in doing—is it evil or good? Who shall decide?

Possibly the high-pressure rate at which we are now living requires both more rest and more change than our ancestors ever dreamed of. They worked a trifle less, but they certainly played a great deal less, than we do. I remember, in my young days, that a month at midsummer and perhaps three

weeks at Christmas were all the holidays allowed in schools. And the annual family migration to the seaside or abroad—why, nobody ever thought of such a thing. Nay, looking a little further back, I suppose our respected grandfathers seldom went twenty miles from the town where they were born. One of mine never did, save once, when, after a lovers' quarrel, he rode to London on horseback; which proceeding so terrified my grandmother, that, as soon as he returned, she married him.

Dear, simple, warm-hearted, narrow-minded ancestors and ancestresses, how your venerated hairs would stand on end, could you join, say one of Cook's "personally conducted" tours, or be placed, quietly and invisibly, at any railway terminus or steamboat quay—even within the three kingdoms! for foreign travelling, to which I do not now refer, is a specialty of itself. You sleep with your fathers as we shall soon sleep with you, and be called narrow-minded in our turn. But when we think of the crass ignorance of some of you, and how the present generation is paying a sad penalty for the utter disregard of hygienic laws by the former one, we incline to believe that you have erred in always sticking, like oysters, to your own particular bed, and that your dislike of quitting it, even for two nights, may account, even as a wholesome

reaction, for your descendants' insane enthusiasm for travelling.

Those of us who do not exactly share this mania, who are too old or too feeble to enjoy the mere pleasure of motion or the excitement of "roughing it," may "sit at home at ease," regarding with bland pity our friends who have gone off for their yearly holiday, and come back—as so many do—greatly the worse for it, in mind, body, and pocket. But there are two sides of the subject. Let us try to see both.

We, who have passed life's climax, enjoyed all we had the chance to enjoy, suffered, let us hope, the worst we are likely to suffer, and begin to feel, with a placid acceptance not quite free from sadness, that sense of weakening powers which warns us that the next phase, of mind and body, must be a slow but sure decadence—we are apt to find growing upon us a half-indolent, half-pathetic selfishness, or selfism, which finds nothing so pleasant as sitting still. We dislike being "put out of our way," and are disturbed by, even resentful of, any change in our hours, habits, or surroundings. A state of mind scarcely sinful—and yet it leads to great errors. Any man who lays himself down as a stone in the world's perpetually flowing current will either impede it—if he is big enough—or it will flow round

him and over him, utterly ignoring him, treating him as nothing living, only a dead, useless stone. To be that—a hinderance, an encumbrance, or an object of mere pity and endurance, to the younger generation—who would not much rather be dead? Ay, a thousand times.

I think one of the saddest things in growing old is to feel that the young have begun to consider us so, to weary a little of our company, to be kind to us instead of happy with us: in short, to feel regarding us—as we also feel towards them, though less strongly—that in the tenderest relations of old and young there is a gulf which nature has fixed, and which, while it is wise to recognize, it is wiser still quietly to ignore, lest either side should discover how wide and deep it is. Therefore I would counsel all who dread its deepening, and tremble lest a time should come when, instead of being a delight and help, they will only be a burden to their children, to guard against the first beginning of this fatal inertia of body or mind—the one reacting upon the other; and to fight against it by every lawful means. One of the best means, I believe, is from time to time to uproot themselves from all domestic bonds and go travelling.

Besides, I am not sure but that the middle of life, or even a little past it, before actual old age has

“clawed us in his clutch,” is not the very best time to see the world. Youth, passionate in its enjoyments, is equally impetuous and self-absorbed in its sorrows. And it is often too deeply in love with itself, or with somebody else, to have room in the heart for that pure love of nature, simple and calm—that intense pleasure in the beauty of the material earth, sanctified by an underlying sense of the immaterial and spiritual—which we feel as we grow older. The young may go into raptures over scenery, and write poems or paint pictures about it, but it is in the eyes of old men and old women that I have oftenest read that deep, silent joy in Nature, for Nature’s self, the Wordsworthian spirit, so to speak, which to those who possess it is a blessedness as long as life endures. For human beings, the very best of them, vex us, wound us, agonize us sometimes: Nature never does. She is always soothing, always tender and kind; even in her ugliness and decay she holds the germ and hope of reviving beauty; and that beauty, in whatever form, is to us the nearest visible expression, deepening as we grow older, of the invisible Father.

Therefore all who wish to see as much as they can of God’s lovely world before leaving it for another—which, we trust, will be at any rate not less beautiful—should lose no time in doing so: in accumulat-

ing a small mental picture-gallery against the dark hour, or, at best, the silent hour, which must come to many, and may come to all; when "the doors are shut in the streets"—"those that look out of the windows are darkened"—and "all the daughters of music are brought low."

Another thing to be set up in opposition to the proverb that "rolling stones gather no moss," is the fact that stationary stones gather a great deal too much moss; that a certain amount of attrition with one's fellow-creatures—neither the people one loves nor the people one hates, those who admire us or those who worry us, but just ordinary fellow-creatures, who take us, and we them, on the mere surface—is a very excellent thing. It teaches us to accept them just as they are, neither better nor worse, and make the best of it. And despite that captious criticism to which so many, the young especially, are only too prone, the elegant eclecticism which is always turning up its nose at its fellow-creatures, and declaring with pride that it loves nobody and finds nobody worth loving, there is nothing like travelling to teach us how many nice people there are in the world—besides ourselves! Some nasty ones—and very nasty, I allow; still the nice predominate. And even though we never see them again, their portraits are fixed, among the landscapes,

in that mental picture-gallery I have spoken of—people of whom we feel that though their orbits and ours may never meet, they somehow brighten the world quite as much as, perhaps a trifle more than, our noble selves. And it is so much better to love than to hate, to admire than to find fault with, to smile than to sneer; if only we could persuade our Timons and Apemantuses—generally young Timons and very inexperienced Apemantuses—to believe so.

I am led to these remarks by a brief experience of life outside my own home life—which is rather shut up, perhaps: as I am supposed to find no light so alluring as the “bonny, blithe blink o’ my ain fireside.” Still, this year, I have been so far “left to mysel’,” as the Scotch say, as to perpetrate a small amount of travelling. Not very far, no farther than our own Great Britain, England and Scotland, but still enough to give me observations and experiences, some, perhaps, not quite worthless, so I set them down; or rather the result of them, carefully abstaining from the identifying of persons or places. Those whom the cap fits may wear it, but I will lay it obnoxiously upon none.

Not even upon the very first people we met with, and “took an interest in,” as I maintain one always should take, if possible, in one’s fellow-travellers.

The gentleman who prided himself on travelling eleven hours in the railway carriage alone with another gentleman, "and we never exchanged a single word!" is not my ideal of a man, to say nothing of a Christian. And I do not feel the least ashamed of myself for being so captivated by the looks of a sickly young mother and a baby about five weeks old, that I deliberately schemed to travel with them, and was rewarded by finding the husband, whom I had at first overlooked, one of the most intelligent, clever, and altogether attractive young fellows with whom one could take a two hours' journey. Handsome, yet utterly void of conceit, and inexpressibly tender to a much less beautiful wife; "awfully" learned, yet wearing his learning "lightly as a flower;" gentlemanly—so much of a gentleman that in the course of conversation he remarked, "We are quite poor, we live in a very small house," with the most composed and unconcerned of smiles. I shall always keep in remembrance those three—husband, wife, and baby. It is worth while travelling if only to come across such people; practical examples that a man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesses, but that he may make it full of "sweetness and light," even though he has to travel through it as these young folks calmly said "they always travelled," second class.

Nor were they the only "nice people" whose portraits I have photographed in between the gorgeous landscapes, English and Scotch, which will float before my shut eyes for many a silent winter day. Let us see. There were two couples, the sole passengers with ourselves in one of David Hutcheson's admirable steamboats, on which we started, one glorious summer morning, for a day's sail in and out of the Northern seas which the author of "A Princess of Thule" has familiarized to Southern minds. What a morning it was too! Loch and mountain, sound and bay, sleeping in a misty heat, the sea more Mediterranean than Hebridean in its peaceful ripple, and the sky of an intense blue, in which one could hardly imagine the possibility of cloud or storm.

No more than one could in the faces of those young creatures who had settled themselves in a sunny corner, apparently forgetting everything and everybody but their two selves: a warrantable selfishness, for once in a lifetime. And, curious and touching contrast, close behind them were another couple, who certainly had not been married "last week," like these, though he was as attentive to her as if they had: a tall, white-haired gentleman and a sweet-looking old lady—evidently out for a holiday together, enjoying their rare pleasure as if it were a honey-moon trip, though they looked like a

grandfather and grandmother. Life's morning and evening, or, at any rate, afternoon, what a subject to poetize or moralize upon! as one is prone to do when upon the whirl of a busy household life comes the sudden idleness of travelling, of which housewives have been heard to say, "How delightful! not to know what one is to get for dinner!" Admirably these living pictures harmonized with the silent landscape, which I shall not attempt to paint, and most tempting it was to speculate upon them—the story that had been, and the story that was yet to be told. Commonplace in neither case was it likely to prove; for though, in a certain sense, it is true that "all things come alike to all," still, in the main, it is we ourselves who make our own history.

Nor were they quite out of harmony with another incident, which came as one of those lessons which travelling teaches concerning races unlike ourselves, and manners and instincts different from our own.

We had been idly looking at—in fact overlooking—a large, long packing-case, which lay in the forepart of the boat, all alone. Now, as we stopped at a little wooden pier, four men came forward and carried it, rather unsteadily, for it seemed heavy, across the gangway on shore. There they left it,

laying on the top of it two baskets filled with eatables and drinkables, and stood loafing about, watching the cable slipped and our boat steam on across the Sound. What a shudder it would have given to the young English bride and bridegroom, had they known that in that packing-case we had landed one silent passenger, probably once belonging to these regions, and now brought home, from Oban, or Glasgow, or still farther off, his life's work done, to sleep, as is the craving of the Highlanders, under the shadow of his native mountains.

To those who know the depth of tenderness in the Scottish heart, it is a perpetual marvel, the extreme indifference and apparent want of respect shown to the dead in Scotland. Not merely in such instances as this, only too common; but at funerals, and especially in the utter neglect of burying-places. Exceptions there are—newly made cemeteries, and a few country church-yards, where the minister happens to be of “advanced” opinions; but as a general rule, you may go from end to end of Scotland and scarcely find a burial-ground which is in the least cared for, which is not one mass of briars, nettles, and weeds. Possibly this springs from the ultra-Calvinistic horror of Popery, as instanced in the silent committing of earth to earth. “Gin we pray ower the deid we’ll sune be

praying for them," said one amateur *Mauser* *Head-rigg* to an English clergyman. If a modern Old Mortality should arise and put in order—even into such decent order as a farmer puts his field—these gardens of the Lord—"God's Acre" as the Germans call them—in which we shall all be one day planted, it would be a great boon to Scotland. And it would save many of those severe remarks—sometimes just, sometimes unjust—which the South makes on the North; and which the North, with its curious national peculiarity, "*Nemo me impune lacessit*," never loses an opportunity of making back again.

How amazed, for instance, must have been our steamer's captain, that grave, courteous, silent Highlander—all Highlanders seem "born gentlemen" in their manners—when we stopped and picked up a boat-load of passengers, who at first sight looked like the "Chief of Ulva's Isle" and his progeny, supposing he had lived to marry Lord Ullin's daughter. Until we noticed that the plaids worn by himself and his three sons were all bran new—of diverse and very brilliant tartans: the whole "get-up" (as he acknowledged with creditable candor, shaking friendly hands, and speaking true Middlesex English) having been bought at Scott and Adie's, in Regent Street.

"We thought it just as well, since we were taking our holiday in Scotland, to make ourselves as Scotch as we could," said he; and they certainly did succeed in making themselves, if not very Scotch, very remarkable. Yet they were so innocently happy; so full of all they had seen and were going to see; so indifferent to weather, rough accommodation, or any of the endless annoyances which tourists have to put up with; above all, so entirely contented with one another—the father and his three boys—that we could not laugh at them, but set them down as good average specimens of the genus "traveller," some of the species of which are very odd fish occasionally.

Such, of a truth, were the next "representative" Britons, who boarded us from a lonely quay that seemed to lead to nowhere—the "funny family" we called them, with most lenient euphuism. They haunted us for three whole days. Dickens ought to have seen them and put them in print; if I do it here, it is not out of ill-nature, for I have not the remotest idea who they are or where they came from, but as a wholesome lesson to travellers in general, and more especially to themselves, since it is "never too late to mend."

They were a party of five: father, mother, two sisters, and a brother (apparently); not at all after

the pattern of your well-accustomed and generally intelligent travellers, who go about with the smallest possible amount of luggage, and the simplest, roughest, and most convenient of clothes. These, on the contrary, had a cart-load of baggage: endless hand-bags, parcels, etc. Their costume, at once flimsy and showy, was a sight to behold. Oh, those straw hats!—*straw-rats*, I feel sure the owners would have called them—they could have been bought only in Tottenham Court Road; and in that locality, I suspect, we could have found the family shop, probably a second-hand furniture-dealer's—there was a certain Israelitish curve in the paternal nose; or a hair-dresser's—the son was “oiled and curled like an Assyrian bull.” No blame to him for that, or to any of them; if having made their honest money anyhow or anywhere, they took a fancy to spend it in travelling, as so many of their kind do—seeing that in strange hotels one can so easily ape the *grand seigneur*, and be happily convinced that nobody suspects Tottenham Court Road. But I do blame the intolerable assurance with which the “funny family” planted themselves on the deck in a circle, and began talking loudly and grandly; sticking themselves in everybody's way, and interposing those wonderful hats, with their flaming ribbons and battered daisies, worst of

all, that abominable cigar, between us and the mountains.

Unpleasant they all were; but the mother was the most intolerable of the party. Ugly—well, that was not her fault; yet there exists a kind of ugliness which is the person's own fault, being the outward expression of inward bad temper, or a mean and malicious nature, which gradually gets stamped even upon the handsomest face; vulgar, with that worst vulgarity, the attempt to appear what one is not; loud voiced, snappish, pushing, domineering. That woman gave me the feeling—rather rare to one who thinks it sinful to regard any fellow-creature as “common or unclean”—that “I wouldn't touch her with a pair of tongs!”

It was Saturday night, and we had planned a quiet Sunday among the mountains, in a solitary place where we knew there was a hotel, good enough for a douce couple who required nothing but food, lodging, and one another's company, which in this busy life is a treat not always attainable even by married people. But we had reckoned without our host—or his guests. Landing, we found every passenger bound for the same hotel as ourselves, including the “funny family.”

What a screaming and scrambling for luggage! What a struggle for places in the two small omni-

buses which had to convey about forty people from the pier to the hotel! Worst of all when, seizing a moment's pause of peace, I turned to look at the grand circle of mountains, illuminated by the setting sun, between me and them came the broad, flat, cross-grained countenance of Mrs. Tottenham Court Road!

Ejection being impossible, we submitted to fate, and her conversation; which never ceased for a single instant. Nobody responding, she turned her attention to the lad who acted as conductor, and began putting to him question after question, which he answered with grave Highland politeness. She asked him his name, his age, if he went regularly to church, and whether he was "Established" or "Free." The latter church, she said, she meant to "patronize" to-morrow, as she agreed most with its opinions. Upon which one daughter fussily laughed, and the other said, "Do be quiet, ma!"

"I won't!" was the angry answer; "and I'll not be laughed at. You're always laughing at me."

"Then you must be pretty well used to it by this time, my dear," said the father, who was the decentest of the lot, though with an expression which in England is called "hen-pecked, and in Scotland "sair hauden doun."

His wife turned round, red as a turkey-cock, and

bade him "hold his tongue." But mercifully she held hers, in high dudgeon, till we all reached the hotel door.

If anybody travelling in the Highlands expects to find a delightful wilderness, where the innocent natives eagerly welcome the stranger, and heap him with true Celtic hospitalities; where he can get everything he wants, and has almost nothing to pay for it; let that deluded mortal go home immediately.

Imagine a grand hotel, planted in the midst of magnificent scenery; but only a hotel, there being no town, and scarcely even a village, for many miles; upon it, with its eighty beds, already quite full, swoop down forty or fifty additional tourists, insisting upon being put up somehow, as there was literally nowhere else to go. This clamorous crowd filled the entrance-hall, and added its quota to the noise and confusion of the *table-d'hôte* dinner (ingeniously arranged for half-past six, when the steam-boat landed at seven) which was going on inside. In the midst stood the unhappy landlord, looking like a fox—no, poor man! like an unfortunate hare with the dogs just upon him; imploring, protesting, certainly not commanding, which would have been his only chance.

"I'll do the best I can for you—I will indeed!

But we are so full. Last night eight ladies slept in the drawing-room, and nine gentlemen in the coffee-room. But patience! patience! and I'll do what I can."

What a prospect for our "quiet Sunday!" We, like most of the others, retired in mute despair, but the "funny family" were loud in their wrath; they had telegraphed, they ought to have been attended to; they were always accustomed to be attended to, etc., etc. They might have been dukes and duchesses at least, and when they found themselves drafted off to sleep at a cottage two miles distant and come back to the hotel to meals, their indignation knew no bounds. But necessity has no law. They were carried off, vociferously complaining to the last. Then—we breathed.

Having settled our own fate as best we could—and bad was the best—we left the crowd and the confusion, and came to sit on a bench, in the quiet twilight outside, near the old couple who had sailed with us all day—waiting for the *table-d'hôte* tea, which was to be "in a few minutes," but did not appear for nearly two hours.

"Have you found accommodation?"—(How grateful was the placid manner and sweet singsong Highland voice, after our Cockney experiences of the last half-hour.) "For us, we have got a room in a

cottage—quite comfortable—we always are comfortable. Everybody is so kind to us.”

No wonder. Once only did we again see those two pleasant faces, and that was in passing the church-door, where they stopped to speak to us, though we had not been to church at all—preferring to keep Sabbath on the shore, with the little waves singing psalms at our feet, and the everlasting hills preaching their silent sermons about Him who “endureth forever.” Yet they did not condemn us, these good people, but smiled, and “hoped we were enjoying ourselves.”

We were, even in spite of the “funny family,” who reappeared at breakfast—the mother in a gorgeous satin gown, carrying an equally splendid cap, wrapped up in a newspaper. In spite, too, of those hateful *table-d’hôte* meals, where one had to sit down with about a hundred people, in a room all gilding and mirrors, but with no ventilation to speak of; where the dinner show of glass, china, and plate was unexceptionable, but the dinner itself as exceptionable as could well be—badly cooked, badly served; and the heat, clatter, and general muddle were such that we were fain to escape and dine off a plateful of rice-pudding, eaten outside on the door-step.

Still, we did enjoy ourselves. In travelling, as in life, pleasures are much more lasting than pains. I

shall never hear the name of that far-away Highland nook without thinking, not of the scramble and the crowd, the worries and annoyances, but of that sunshiny Sunday morning on the shore, with the white gulls walking about, so fearless that you could come quite near them. Also of that gray, rainy, yet delicious Sunday evening, standing outside the little Gaelic church, and hearing the murmur of the minister's voice and then the tender wail of the Gaelic hymn, as we watched the yellow sunset gleam over those low-lying clouds in the horizon, which we understood to be Harris and the Lewis.

Afterwards, how curious it was to watch the church "scale," as they call it, and the groups of grave, reverent-looking church-goers melt gradually away, some dropping in boats across the bay, some winding up the hill-side road, slowly, steadily, as if preparing for a walk of several miles. Most of the old men wore the kilt, the bonnet and plaid, and the old women those beautiful white "mutches," with a cambric kerchief tied over the head; but the younger generation blossomed out in all the modern fashions—and ugly enough too. Soon there were only a few left standing chatting by the church-door, or the broken hedge of the graveyard; neglected as usual, with a few sheep seeking a meagre

repast among its nettles and briars. They eyed us strangers with a passing curiosity, as some of the "tourists" who for two months in the year pour down upon them like a flood, then ebb away again, leaving the place to its pristine solitude. How deep that must be, one can imagine—and how Sunday, as their one day of social meeting as well as worship, must be prized among them. I saw more than one group which involuntarily reminded me of the song "Logan Water"—

"Nae mair at Logan kirk will he
 Atween the preachings meet wi' me,
 There meet wi' me, and when 'tis mirk
 Convoy me hame frae Logan kirk.
 Weel may I weep, thae days are gane;
 Frae kirk or fair I come alane,
 While my dear lad maun face his faes
 Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

Yes, that Sunday was a true Sabbath, a day of peace; but with Monday morning the battle began again. Our hotel, if difficult to get into, was still more so to get out of. The throng of travellers, stranded there from Saturday to Monday, were eager to depart, and there seemed to be no means of doing so, except by one coach, the places in which had been filled up for days, and two or three "carriages," which meant small wagonettes not much better

than an open cart. The helpless landlord was again surrounded by a clamorous swarm who could get nothing from him but the vague assurance, "Oh yes, I'll send you on somehow—presently, presently."

He never lost his temper or his politeness, poor man! but he looked half-dazed with the perplexities of his position. He was decidedly the round stick in the square hole, and very shaky therein. When, as a climax to his woes, there poured down upon him the "funny family," vociferously insisting on being sent on "away from this abominable place," he looked as if he could almost have wrung his hands.

So could I, when he proposed that we should "share a carriage" with them. I can stand a great deal; but to go through the finest scenery in Scotland, face to face with that woman—it was too much. Reckless of rights or privileges, or anything, I seized my luggage, mounted the first wagonette that came to the door, and in it we were mercifully driven away, with a couple of respectable elderly gentlemen as fellow-passengers, leaving our enemies far behind.

Oh, the heavenly beauty of that drive! If I could describe it—but I cannot, nor will not, lest it should be identified. At its end, while sitting peaceably in

front of a little inn, watching the quiet loch below, and wondering how I could civilly escape from a benign middle-aged gentleman, who would insist upon informing me what his name was, where he lived, how many brothers and sisters he had, and how he was an old bachelor, "though that was not his fault" (curious, how very confidential one's fellow-travellers get sometimes!), I heard a noise and "scrimmage," and there, in the midst of a little crowd, face to face with the big Highlandman who drove the coach, stood quivering with passion, so that his well-oiled curls actually shook, and his smug countenance became livid, almost green, our little Tottenham Court Road "gentleman," as he would doubtless have called himself.

"I'll not be imposed upon," he screamed (he said "himposed," but h's and r's being a matter of accidental up-bringing, are scarcely a fair subject for ridicule). "You want to cheat me out of two shillings, do you? But you sha'n't. I'll have the law upon you, if there's law to be had."

Here the driver explained, with perfect politeness, and in the best of English, that he had carried a great deal of extra luggage, for which the disputed two shillings was not unfair payment.

"I never bargained to pay it, and you sha'n't compel me. Here's my address—but you'll not get

out of me a single halfpenny. Dare to touch the 'goods' " (most betraying word!)—"lay a finger on the goods, and I'll have the law upon you!"

So stormed the young man, in the shrillest of Cockney tongues; and so we left him, surrounded by his sympathizing and indignant family, the centre of a small crowd of unmoved Highlanders, who probably did not take in half he said, but who must have gained a very odd idea of the justice, liberality, and general good manners of English "gentlemen."

But, in all honesty, I must say that such specimens do not always come from Tottenham Court Road. About the vulgarest, coarsest, and most generally unpleasant of my fellow-travellers, were four people, behind whom we sat, on a coach-top, for eight weary hours. They were young, well-dressed, well-looking, certainly well-to-do, for they talked of their place in the country, their horses, greenhouses, etc. Two were a married couple, the other two, I imagined from their jokes, a pair newly *fiancés*, and all belonging apparently to the "upper circles." Yet their inane conversation, seasoned with incessant slang, their loud tones, louder laughter, and utter want of modesty or dignity in themselves or in their behavior to one another, would have done credit to any of the modern "fast" female novels.

I never met the like anywhere—out of a book. The scenery we passed through was quite lost upon them: they never noticed it, or merely said of a mountain that it was “jolly big,” or of a waterfall that it would be “an uncommon good place to cool champagne in.” Sitting on either side the coachman, they “flirted” with him, these young and pretty women, after a fashion that evidently quite flattered the honest man; got him to stop the coach more than once that the guard might gather mushrooms, heather, etc., for them; and altogether comported themselves in such a manner that a little girl—unfortunately a compelled listener to their conversation—whispered wonderingly, “Mamma, are these ladies and gentlemen?”

A “lady,” a “gentleman”—often sorely misapplied and misappropriated terms! It is in travelling, especially, that one finds out the real meaning of them. Their pseudo-possessors cannot carry on the sham very long. The gorgeously dressed woman who gives herself airs at the *table d'hôte*, the bumptious, grumbling, imperative man who lords it over landlords and waiters, are speedily distinguished from the “real gentry,” as servants call them, and treated accordingly, even by servants.

As a contrast to these rich vulgarians—ay, the squires and squiresses being as vulgar as the shop-

keepers—I call to mind another family, also rich, and also, like the Tottenham Court Road people, “children of Israel,” whom I watched with great interest, on a steamboat’s deck, for some hours. They consisted of a married couple, their grown-up daughter or niece, I could not make out which, and her English governess. Simply and suitably dressed, the only trace of “barbaric pearl and gold” being the girl’s ear-rings—each an enormous pearl; quiet and unobtrusive in manner, gentle and pleasant with one another, and especially so to the governess, it was a treat to look at them, with their strange, dark, Asiatic faces, so different from those around. Not of the highest Jewish type, which makes one of the most beautiful faces in the world, but still far from common; and very characteristic. The husband’s especially, shrewd, and even worldly, as it was—I am sure that little quiet man had financial transactions by the million somewhere—wore sometimes an expression quite pathetic in its tenderness; especially as he sat watching the gambols of a small, curly-haired dot of a thing belonging to some passenger. Possibly he himself was childless, or had lost a child of the same age, for when this one tumbled over his feet, he picked it up and restored it to its mother, with a look I shall never forget. I have not the remotest idea who he was, but shall

always recall him as an admirable specimen of a Jew—and a gentleman.

One more of these photographs of travellers, taken without their knowledge. But if nothing in them has been extenuated, still I trust I have never “set down aught in malice.” The sharpest things have been said with a hope that those who read may examine themselves and mend. And if this paper should fall into the hands of those last two—an English wife and an Irish husband—with whom we travelled down the Caledonian Canal, it will not harm them to recognize themselves—and me.

We had met them in the train over-night, and I had noticed her delicate looks, and his extreme tenderness over her. Now, one often meets honeymoon couples—I am sure we met half a score, poor things! none of them looking so very happy, after all; but to see a middle-aged husband and wife travelling together is always a good sight. The remark of the Glasgow man to his friend on board a Clyde steamer, “Are ye gaun on pleasure, or is the gude wife wi’ ye?” has in it a biting truth. We are obliged to share our duties, but we never voluntarily share our pleasures with those who, however near, or even dear, are out of sympathy with ourselves. These two—they scarcely spoke, but to see his look at her, and her smile back at him, as he ar-

ranged her cushion or wrapped the rug over her, told the whole story. He was a strong-built, not very intellectual-looking man—hunter, or fisher apparently; but she had a sweet, refined face, the kind of face that one turns back to gaze at with the feeling, “I should like you so much if I knew you.”

So finding ourselves face to face on board the steamer, I spoke, and we afterwards talked together a great deal, she and I, on all sorts of subjects, artistic, ethical, moral—not the least being that one subject most important to women and mothers, the right up-bringing of children. She told me of her own six, whom she had parted from five weeks ago. She was travelling for health, and eager to gain it, so as to be fit for her endless duties; and her eyes brightened as she described her family child by child, and spoke of the sweetness they gave to her life, spite of its inevitable anxiety. Such a picture it was of the true mother’s heart—strong and tender, conscientious and brave. We two women who never met before, and will never meet again, who to this day are ignorant even of one another’s names, talked for an hour, as if we had known one another all our lives. And then in the confusion at Banavie I missed her—and never saw her again. But if by any chance she should read these lines, she will remember.

No more of travellers; but I should like to say a word in the abstract about travelling, and especially in this region. Everybody complains, and with truth, that the Highlands of Scotland, with all their beauties and conveniences—as being so much more getatable than Switzerland, Norway, and other far-away places—are the worst places possible in which to take a holiday. Partly from the climate—yet that is not worse than in all mountainous districts—but chiefly from the enormous expense and discomfort found from the want of any organized system of travelling, and the great disproportion of travellers to the accommodation provided for them. During the season, which lasts little more than two months, August and September, there is by coast, boat, or even railroad—so far as railways have penetrated—a perpetual struggle, “each man for himself, and the de’il tak’ the hindmost.” In October coaches stop, boats cease running, hotels are shut up, and the whole country sinks into solitude and desolation. A pity! because, if tourists only knew, winter there is as lovely as summer, and the whole northwest coast of Scotland is, in consequence of the Gulf Stream, almost as warm as the southern coast of England. At Oban, for instance, roses will often be in flower at Christmas, and fuchsias, myrtles, and even hydrangeas live in sheltered corners

all winter through. If you prepare yourself for uncertain weather, for sudden alterations of wet and dry, warm and cold, you could not find a more beautiful country to travel in, all the year round, than the northwest Highlands of Scotland.

But travellers are of three sorts—the young, strong, and intelligent, who can do anything, and put up with anything; the idle and luxurious, usually also the unintelligent, who will put up with nothing; and a third—a very large class—to whom “roughing it,” on the one hand, and expensive show, on the other, are worse than distasteful, absolutely impossible. It is for these I plead, the not over wealthy, the elderly or the delicate, who nevertheless have great delight in travelling, and who are the very people to whom travelling is most beneficial, if it could be done in a rational and comfortable way, instead of being as now, to many sensitive and suffering folk, one long torment from beginning to end.

For their sakes I protest in the strongest manner against the whole system of hotels and travelling generally in the north of Scotland. “Very Scotch it is!” was a remark which I should not venture to repeat, were not the speaker a Scotchman as proud of his country as his country is proud of him. But it is that very Scotch pride which is at the root of

the evil. A country which, consciously or unconsciously, is—dare I say it?—a little less civilized than some others, persists in putting the best on the outside, and covering its internal roughness by external show. Also, perhaps, because it aims to attract that large number of tourists who, like our Tottenham Court Road friends, require to be caught by the outside; by huge, splendid hotels, crowded *table-d'hôte* dinners, city waiters, and all sorts of incongruous and unnecessary luxuries. Yet surely the true comfort of travelling, to all educated travellers, consists not in these, but in the certainty of finding wherever you stop a good bed, a decent, punctual, and well-cooked meal, and the possibility of going and coming by some convenient vehicle. But I must honestly and sorrowfully say, that in all our travelling we never slept upon one comfortable bed, or ate one decent dinner, or found, without endless trouble, either places or punctuality in any conveyance, except—let me be just—now and then in the coaches of the Caledonian Company, and in the excellent steamers of David Hutcheson & Co.

These latter, who are “a kittle company,” as one of their drivers shrewdly remarked, telling us how an incapable man, or one given to whiskey, had no chance of remaining in their service, have, however, put in the thin end of the wedge not unsatis-

factorily. Their boat service is admirable; why could they not go a step further, now that the Highland railway is opening up the country, so far as it ever can be opened? (Alas! if John Ruskin had seen these bands of navvies clearing away the birks and rowans, and putting drain-pipes into the watercourses of the lovely Pass of Brander!) Why should not this careful and "kittle" firm start a regular chain of hotels, well-built, well-ventilated—I have never seen one hotel in all Scotland where the windows will open at the top—well managed, and supplied with all necessary comforts in exchange for needless and obnoxious splendors?

Curiously enough, my ideal hotel is one in Ireland; that wild north of Ireland where civilization is about on a par with the back-woods or Central Africa. Never shall I forget what a haven of rest it was, after driving forty miles on an outside-car in pelting rain, to be taken in at Gweedore, that oasis in the desert, created out of pure benevolence by Lord George Hill, and well known to salmon-fishers at least. It was a building perfectly simple within and without, the dining-room being most like a monkish refectory, the drawing-room like any ordinary parlor. The bedrooms were excellent, though furnished without the slightest show. In its capital stable-yard, the only vehicles were out-

side-cars; but you found always good horses, good drivers, and no difficulty in getting both at any hour. Meals well cooked, served to the minute, and waited upon by women only, not the abominable white-neck-clothed, black-coated "Coming, sir," who never does come when you want him; domestic arrangements so perfect that one was forced to acknowledge how, even in Ireland, can be found orderliness, neatness, cleanliness, punctuality, when you take the trouble to teach them—that, wherever I go, Gweedore Hotel always presents itself to my mind as the very place to be desired if a man were driven to find, as some cynic observes, "his warmest welcome at an inn."

Why should there not be more such? They would not cost so much in building as those palatial erections which you find dotted here and there in Highland wildernesses, which one reaches expecting princely accommodation, and quits, after paying an enormous bill, wearied, worried, sleepless, and half-starved. Half the money spent by the projectors in useless show would have insured a hostelry large enough to accommodate any sudden "spate" of autumnal tourists, and provided with simple substantial comforts, such as would win custom not merely for two months, but all the year round.

Will nobody try? The achievement might be

too much for any private individual, unless there should arise some wonder of a hotel-keeper with the diplomatic genius of a Bismarck, the strategy and courage of a Moltke, and the plausibility of a Beaconsfield. But could not some intelligent person, making a bold stand against that insane craving for luxury and show which is spreading like a canker from root to branch of our social system, start a "Comfortable Hotel Company" or "Travelers' Joy Society," and manage it so that tourists of moderate means, health, and nerves might have a little wholesome wandering about this beautiful world, without being half killed in the process?

Also, will not those who travel take a little more pains to do so as gentle folk and Christians, leaving their ill-tempers, pride, and selfishness at home, and feeling that amid the many bad things developed by travelling there are likewise some good ones? Such as the power of helping one's fellow-creatures in small ways, of being kind to the weak and sickly, of showing to everybody patience, courtesy, and that quick sympathy which is the brightening of all life, from a fireside to a railway-carriage; which does nobody any harm, and, be it ever so brief, often does a world of good to both giver and receiver?

Above all, in roaming about the world, one gets to feel, more and more strongly, that it is man alone

who makes its ugliness and badness; the good God made it, and meant it to be, "very good"—ay, even in storm and tempest, that "abominable weather" which people sometimes cry out against, as if it were a personal offence to them and created for their special inconvenience. And it is trying—to travel for a whole month, in lovely scenery, and perhaps get about six fine days. But we grow used to it; we even come to find a grandeur in it: "rain and hail, snow and vapor, wind and storm, fulfilling his word." A traveller who can see his face, and hear his voice, everywhere, in all nature, is never either disconsolate, dreary, or alone.

Let me recall, as a last picture, one of the pleasant bits in all my wanderings, a four hours' drive in an open dog-cart, through pelting rain, along the side of a salt-water loch, with companions whose cheerfulness under difficulties and patience under annoyances made the long journey short and the bad weather bright. Also, another seven hours, on the top of a coach, through mountain passes and silent glens, amid views that would have been glorious could one have seen them, but they were all blotted out by a heavy Scotch mist. Until, just at the close of the day, resting on a hill-top where two glens meet, it all cleared off, and we stood gazing before us and behind, from this Pisgah-like height, upon a

scene as lovely as that given to Moses to behold—and never journey through. This heavenly sight—like the Beautiful Mountains or the Land of Beulah—one sees nowhere except in Scotland; and there only for a brief space, during the transparent clearness of atmosphere which follows the cessation of heavy rain. But it gladdens one's spirit even to remember it, like happiness coming at the end of a life, or, still better, like that which we look forward to after life's ending. For it seems to be—nay, it is, as are all lovely things in the visible world—a type of things invisible; an image of that “light of life” in which may we never cease to “walk,”

“Till travelling days are done.”

SAVE THE CHILDREN

SAVE THE CHILDREN.

I WAS once telling my little girl the story of the Deluge; putting in very simple words that great mystery, how in some crises justice and mercy come to be one and the same thing; how to sweep away, at once and together, with a great omnipotent hand, these two always coexistent elements, sin and pain, may be, in this case apparently was, the only course possible to a Being who is the Father, not of a portion only, but of the entire universe. I tried hard to teach her what I believed—what one is bound to believe if one accepts the idea of a loving Father at all—and thought I was succeeding, till suddenly the listener's face clouded over.

“Yes—but”—with a passionate burst of almost inconsolable tears—“why, oh why, did God drown all the little babies?”

Ay, that is the grand stumbling-block to old as to young, to Christian as to philosopher: why do the innocent suffer for the guilty? That all sin should bring its punishment, and require to be washed away

by any deluge, or burned out in any purgatory, provided both ended with this life—finite guilt with finite punishment—one can understand this. But the terrible thing is that each human being does not solely bear its own sin, nor work out its own retribution. Upon others, near and distant, down to the “third and fourth generation,” falls the debt, and it must be paid.

A very good woman—wife and mother, full of endless benevolence to every mortal creature—once said to me, “If ever it comes to you to have to choose between the old and the young—those whose lot is or has been in their own hands, and those who did not choose their lot, who did not ask to be born, and whose life is not dependent on themselves—if ever you are put in this hard strait—*Save the children.*”

Words which I scarcely understood or agreed with then; I do now. Many a time, walking through London streets, and passing those miserable little creatures, wan, worn, dirty, wicked, who look up with what seems a perpetual protest against Providence, unless one has faith enough to accept it as a dumb outcry for help to Providence through us—many a time, I say, there flashes across my mind those three words of wisdom as well as pity—“Save the children!” Grown-up people are so hopeless:

aid them as you will, rescue them as you may; in nine cases out of ten "the dog returns to his vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire." Penitent thieves, reclaimed drunkards—such instances are sometimes, but, oh, how rare! One leper returns to give glory to God—but, where are the nine?

Still we must go on, remembering who "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Yet, alas! for the sufferers too young to have need of repentance—the helpless bodies, the white blank-paper souls, alike doomed to destruction, as it were, even from birth. Amid the vile misery-haunted dens in most large cities, one can recognize not only the wisdom, the justice, but the almost necessity of a deluge—if only one could shut one's ears to the drowning cries of the "poor little babies."

We all have our work to do, with only a certain time to do it in, and a certain amount of strength to do it with. Happy those who can recognize this, and condense their labors so as to produce the utmost practical good. Much benevolence is spread like butter over so large a surface that it results in what the little folks call "bread and scrape." I confess, my heart is apt to harden itself towards most of the countless forms of adult charity; it seems to me that the only hope of mending this generation is through those who are growing up to

form the next one. Therefore, when the other day I was asked to go and see the East London Hospital for Children, with a view to writing about it, and so perhaps gathering a little money to prevent the shutting up one ward, which otherwise, in these hard times, must inevitably be done, and soon, I agreed at once.

Let me tell the story of my visit, as simply and straightforwardly as I told it at home when I returned. In my own voice too—without any fear of egotism; feeling myself in this case merely a voice, the mouth-piece of a multitude of silent little pleaders, who have no chance of pleading for themselves, of appealing to the hundreds of equally silent men and women—especially women—all either working or ready to work, if only there was a way open to them. Possibly, some accidental word here may open that way.

When I started it was a bright November morning, which made even the East End of London—the dreary region between Cannon Street and Shadwell, look cheery and picturesque; Tower Hill, Smithfield, all those familiar historical spots which it is difficult to realize were historical, or that they ever knew any other life than that which now flows through them. How strange, to think that on the very bit of ground where those two boys stand “chaffing” each other,

poor young Anne Boleyn—whose skeleton with its “little neck” was lately found here—took her last look of sun and sky; that just where passes a bawling costermonger and his cart was gathering the furious or shuddering crowd who watched the flames leap up round a living man, and then sink down over a handful of calcined bones! Has the world grown wiser or less wicked since those days? God knows. If we did not firmly believe that it is his world, and that he is dealing with it, age after age, in his own mysterious way, our hearts would sometimes utterly sink.

Mine did, I own, in going eastward. To those accustomed to a peaceful, pure country life, amid birds and trees and the like, the mere fact of living in a town—almost any sort of town—seems hateful and intolerable. Those narrow streets, pre-eminent-ly hateful, with a population apparently half foreign, to judge by the many German, Italian, and especially Jewish names that were over shop-fronts—what lives must be led in them! Especially by the children, the poor little souls whose only play-place is the gutter, who never saw either a field or a daisy.

Still, the region was not quite forsaken. There was a “Sailors’ chapel,” and there was another friendly-looking door, inscribed, “Strangers’ Rest. Sailors may write their letters, read, and smoke. Noth-

ing to pay." And, alas! close by was another door very much grander, in fact quite palatial in its ornamentation, where there *was* something to pay—money, health, life—the soul's life as well as the body's. And of such I counted not one or two, but dozens, in the brief distance. Verily, where there are so many gin-shops for the parents, the poor children must sorely need a hospital.

Reaching it, I found it so small and simple-looking that I almost doubted if I had come to the right place. We are so accustomed to see charitable institutions swamped under a magnificence of architectural development, that a plain building in which nothing has been wasted upon mere ornamentation is quite refreshing. Yet simplicity is never ugly—and this building is pleasant enough to the eye, besides being planted in an open new street which is not quite airless, even in Shadwell.

Some of my readers may have heard of this East London Hospital and how it began. An Indian doctor and a trained nurse, meeting in their daily avocations during the cholera outbreak of ten or twelve years ago, fell in love, married, and then being rather "peculiar" people—that is, people who carried out literally the doctrines—no! He never preached any doctrine—but the commands of Christ, a proceeding which astonishes most "Christians" exceedingly—

they determined not to quit the scene of their labors. Filled with pity for the miseries and needs of the child population around them, they set up in an old sail-loft ten little beds; took in, out of the hundreds near, ten sick children, nursed, fed, clothed them, and comforted them either into life or death, as God willed: doing this principally at their own expense, after the words, "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor: and thou shalt find treasure in heaven." Not on earth, certainly, for Mr. Heckford died in his prime, and Mrs. Heckford has now gone abroad, worn out before her time, to do the best she can with a lonely old age. But before then their work had been done. They both saw the poor sail-loft and the ten little cots transmuted into a large public hospital, where three wards, continually full of children, blessed their eyes, and rewarded their loving and faithful hearts. I refuse to believe that these two lives, though sacrificed, have been either lost or wasted or unhappy lives. A memorial tablet, which is the only decoration of the entrance-hall, will long speak of them both—the devoted husband and wife, who gave up their childless lives for the good of children.

Very simple, quiet, and silent was this entrance-hall, and as simple as unpretentious was the welcome of the two officials whom I disturbed in their

morning's work—being an early and unexpected visitor. All the better. One remarkable feature in this hospital is that it has no "visiting days;" at any time any one of the inquisitive or benevolent public may enter and examine the work it is doing.

We wasted no time, but plunged at once into this examination. I found that besides the medical staff, the management of the hospital, on Mrs. Heckford's inevitable secession, was carried practically on by three persons—the secretary, Mr. Ashton Warner, and two ladies; one a nurse from St. Thomas's Hospital, invaluable in her own department, and another, who ruled the commissariat, and was said to "know everything that came into the place, from an ounce of pepper upwards," and to be the most admirable of housekeepers as well as an excellent book-keeper. I did not see this lady, but any one who knows how difficult it is to rule a house may well accord some merit to the domestic ruler of a hospital.

The nurse I did see, for she came to me at once. She is so entirely the soul of the place that I must needs speak of her. I will do it only by the name of "Sister St. Catherine," for something in her face reminded me strangely of Raffaele's St. Catherine, leaning peacefully against the wheel which she knows is to be her death. Every hospital nurse

must face death, soon or late, with the same sweet calmness. And perhaps it is that—this daily familiarity with the great terror of humanity—which gives to all their faces, whether Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity, *Petite Sœurs des Pauvres*, or the excellent Protestant nursing sisterhoods, which, I am thankful to say, are multiplying every day, that universal expression of sweet strength and calm courage, which in a nurse is the utmost blessing to both the sick and the friends of the sick.

At the first glance I saw what Sister St. Catherine was, must necessarily be—how she had found her vocation, and fulfilled it. Would that all women could do the same!

She took me to the first ward—named after the Princess Mary of Teck, who opened it. It was the accident ward.

“You can imagine,” she said, “how necessary this is, in such a district as that about us, where the drunkenness and ignorance is so great on the part of the parents that the children are exposed to accidents from morning till night. Numbers are brought in to us having tumbled down-stairs, or been run over in the streets, or fallen into the fire. Last Saturday night there was a terrible case of the latter—such a dear little girl, burned all over face and neck and arms. I never saw anything so bad.”

"Did she live?"

"Oh no," said the nurse, with that half-sad but wholly peaceful smile. "Better not. She was at rest by Sunday morning."

We went in. A long, bright, cheerful room, with two rows of little beds—"cots" they call them—so placed that the light from the windows cheered, not dazzled, the small patients. Evidently the hospital authorities recognize the great advantage of light, in sickness as well as in health.

"Yes," said the nurse, pointing to a semiconvalescent, whose clothes—welcome sign!—lay near him, and were being examined by him with deep interest. "Yes; we thought that poor little man was in too dark a corner, so we moved his cot, and gave him a different view. He began to get better immediately."

From bed to bed we passed—some hopeful, some hopeless. More than one clearly would be empty before many days or hours. The saddest point of all was that most of the cases were not pure accident—what we term "the visitation of God"—but arising from hereditary taint: the drunkenness and other vices of the parents producing in the children every form of constitutional corruption—rickets, hip complaint, bone disease, cancer.

"These are our worst and most painful cases.

Often surgery is the only hope of cure; and the children are so weakly that we dare not risk an operation. Sometimes, when otherwise life is impossible, we do risk it, and it succeeds."

And if failing, I thought to myself, why regret? For, in going through this ward, one almost felt that death was better than life.

Still, its brightness, its perfect cleanliness, the total absence in it of ugly sights and of the painful "hospital smell," so difficult to avoid even with any amount of carbolic acid, in an accident ward, lessened a little the inexpressible sadness, sadder than any grown-up hospital I ever went through. For there, in many instances, the patients have themselves to blame—and even in dying they have, most of them, enjoyed some share of the blessings of life; but these hapless innocents have found life no blessing, but a curse from the very beginning. And whose fault? Not their own, certainly.

The most mournful sight of all was the four basins in the middle of the room—two empty, two full—but with what occupants! O ye mothers of wholesome "proper" babies—fat, rosy, screaming, kicking, happy, innocent little torments—or delights, according as you make them and bring them up to be—could you come and look at these—wretched abortions of humanity, no bigger than

dolls, with withered old faces, and skinny, yellow, powerless arms! All quiet—so terribly quiet—always “good,” alas! for they have not the strength to cry. I think no mother alive who recalled her own child’s babyhood could see these poor babies without tears.

Yet, to see them clean, warm, comfortable, each with its bottle beside it and tenderly looked after by a pleasant-faced young nurse, was something.

“It is so,” answered Sister St. Catherine. “We do the best we can with them; but when the parents are so steeped in vice, what can you expect for the children? No, there is little hope here. But we have hope sometimes,” she added, brightening up, as a child of seven or eight toddled forward and caught her by the dress, a wholesome little thing who scarcely looked like an invalid, except that her throat was bandaged up.

“This is one of two most interesting cases we had lately. Croup, in which, as a last chance, we had to try tracheotomy; and we saved both, I am thankful to say. This little woman will soon go out quite well,” patting her on the head, at which the “little woman” looked “as pleased as Punch.”

From cot to cot we went, the Sister having a cheering or sympathizing word for each, and every one brightened as she passed. One very dull-look-

ing boy had just had an operation for polypus in the nose. He did not speak, but as the kind hand was laid on his head, a faint red came into his cheeks and two tears rolled out of his shut eyes.

Only one other patient was crying, a small creature of three or so, whose mother had just been to see it.

"We sometimes have sore work with them after the mothers' visits. But generally speaking the mothers do not seem to care: they just leave them here and go. Often we keep them on when they are quite convalescent, not daring to send them home, for we know too well to what sort of home they are going. There is a child upstairs, the dearest little soul! her foot has been amputated—it is disease, not accident—and she is also blind, though with some hope of cure by-and-by. But, meanwhile, what can be done? The father dead, the mother a confirmed drunkard: if we sent her home she would assuredly die of neglect, even if she did not get killed outright, as some of them are, through pure carelessness. The future of our children, after they leave us, is one of the most difficult problems we have to deal with. Yet they must be influenced, more or less, by their stay here—by the habits of cleanliness, decency, order, obedience, which they cannot help learning, or at least seeing around them. All the good they gain cannot surely be lost."

"No," I said, meditating sadly on what has often been an idea of mine, though, I fear, too Utopian and too full of difficulties ever to be more than an idea, that the children who unhappily belong to neglectful or unworthy parents should be taken possession of by the State, and considered children of the State, their natural or unnatural progenitors having no longer the smallest right to them, except perhaps, in all ranks above pauperism, the compulsory right of paying for their maintenance.

We went on through the ward; Sister St. Catherine carrying out the sweet tradition of her name, though she cannot have "*coiffée Sainte Catherine*," as the French say, for so very many years. But there was half a lifetime of experience written on her benign face. Sweeter, nobler, more unselfish, and therefore more useful, than that of many wives and mothers, is the life of an unmarried woman who has voluntarily assumed the cares of matronhood, and taken other people's helpless or forsaken children to her motherly breast.

Case after case, regarded evidently not merely as "cases," but with a tender eye to individual suffering, appealed to her as she passed. A boy with some "head trouble"—"Oh, it aches awful! just turn me on my side." Another—a big fellow—"I'm getting better; I know I am!" A third (she

was a mulatto girl, and a little white girl sat reading to her)—she, alas! would never be better—she was dying of consumption, but peacefully, so peacefully! and her small companion seemed devoted to her.

“Both come from Dr. Bernardo’s Home. We have several of his ‘children’ here, and they are all so good. He does no end of good in these ‘parts.’”

And as we went on talking, I was glad to notice the completely catholic feeling there was; how in this terrible East End, where High Church and Low Church, though both most Christianly doing their duty to the poor, are a little unchristianly oblivious of their duty to one another, the hospital seemed a meeting-point where all animosities died out. No one can look at these sick and dying children—so patient, so suffering, and from sufferings not their own fault—without somehow feeling that “of such is the kingdom of heaven,” by whatever road they are led thither.

These three wards—the “Princess Mary,” the “Enfield” (after Viscount Enfield, the president), and the “Heckford” (in memory of the hospital’s noble founder)—are all it consists of. There is no fever ward—infectious cases are not taken in, or passed on, as soon as discovered, to other hospitals.

But, as I have said before, the principal patients are those suffering from accidents, or congenital hereditary disease, these latter being the worst of all. I cannot yet get out of my mind the piteous spectacle of a cancerous leg, swollen enormously, with the veins starting through the skin, belonging to the poor wasted body of a baby twenty months old.

"Polly!" It opened its eyes and smiled at the nurse, then lifted up its mouth to be kissed before it took its physic, and dropped to sleep again. "She is the sweetest little thing. She was brought in two months ago in hope of amputation, but the doctors found her too weak, so they let her lie quietly here—till the end."

"You will be glad to see her in her coffin."

"Yes, I shall; I very often am, when they suffer so. And yet, while there is life there is hope—with children especially. What they struggle through is something wonderful. Wonderful, too, is the skill and tenderness of our doctors over them, especially one," whom she named; but I will not, knowing that the blessings of hundreds of "saved" children will follow that young man wherever he goes.

Each ward has belonging to it a nurse's bedroom, a little kitchen, and housemaid's offices. These, with the operating-room, the nurses' dining-room,

the board-room, and secretary's apartment, were all I saw, but I understood the domestic arrangements below to be most admirable.

"The out-patients are just going away—the surgical ones. Our physician is here of afternoons—will you come and look at them?"

So we went to the two rooms, easily accessible from without, where advice and medicine are given, not only to children, but mothers. The forlorn crowd was just melting away, and the surgeon came and spoke to me. I asked him afterwards to write what he had said—here it is:

"You wished me to note down the special features of our little hospital. They are—

"1. The youngest infants are taken in, the upper limit of age being fourteen. This allows a wide field for selection of cases.

"2. There is special provision for accidents. In a neighborhood like ours, with the docks and ship-building yards close at hand, and the streets always crowded, accidents are constantly occurring. Many lives are saved by help being near at hand.

"3. There has been no useless outlay in ornamentation. The entire cost was £15,000 for ninety beds, on the most approved plan. Each cot costs £50 per annum, the lowest average of any hospital in London.

"4. The training of nurses—lady-nurses and others. I have always felt that a children's hospital was the fittest place for a lady to commence such a career—she would necessarily find less to shock her, at first, than in a hospital for adults.

"5. One never should lose sight of the humanizing influences on the children themselves. They come from homes where such is entirely wanting. Some of the bigger girls, I am certain, leave us with new ideas, new aspirations, while few altogether forget the comforts of a regular and orderly mode of life."

To these data Sister Saint Catherine has kindly added some more. She differs a little from the doctor on the question of nurses. I give both opinions, as this matter—suggestions for the gathering together and instruction of a few educated women in that most noble and most necessary calling, of a trained nurse, was one of my special aims in writing this article.

"I do not quite agree about ladies going to children's hospitals to get inured to the duties of a nurse. Many ladies might come here whose health could not stand the wear and tear of an adult hospital; but I should consider it a waste of time in any who intended eventually to take up hospital work. In most training-schools now we are required to

promise four years' service. It would scarcely be advisable to add on another year. . . . Out-patients—women and children both—come here with a governor's letter. Medical cases are treated five times, and surgical cases three times a week. The hospital is fed from the out-patients' department, and very urgent other cases—a wise selection being made. They come in, generally, in a very dirty state, are bathed at once, and their clothes returned to their friends. We supply them with flannels, night-gowns, etc. As soon as they are able to be about, we clothe them entirely. Therefore clothing of every description, and for every age—from babies up to boys and girls of fourteen, is most valuable, especially as we have to send the convalescents out well clothed, or they would soon be back again in the hospital. At this winter season, when we may expect our worst cases, we cannot turn them out ill clad.

“Of their patience I have already told you. It is wonderful how the rough boys and girls tone down with us; and how the ‘naughty’ children become good, from the kindness of our nurses, whose profusion of affection towards them all is very touching. Accidents are taken in at any time; if not serious enough to be kept here, the patient comes every morning to be ‘dressed.’ We have

often very bad burns and scalds, and children run over.

“Over the nursing department I have the entire control. Some nurses have come to me for training—some by recommendation. All, I believe, are actuated by the kindest of motives; some, I trust, by the highest; in no case have I ever detected the slightest harshness towards the little ones. . . . The age I consider most desirable in a nurse is twenty-one or twenty-two. She should be of good health, and from a respectable class; able to read and write well, and generally intelligent. A small salary is given the first year, increasing two pounds yearly. They have full board and uniform given them, all the time they are with us. I should like to get a few ladies who would pay for their training here; but in some cases, where a lady is very desirable, and very desirable, I could arrange for her coming without payment. It does the nurses good as well as the children—our work here. . . .”

This I can confirm, so far as one can judge by physiognomy. Each, gentle or simple—some were “young persons,” and some young ladies—had the same look on her face: the Saint Catherine look I call it—of mingled firmness, sweetness, and patience. And it is about the most beautiful look that can be seen on the face of any woman.

Of all women's work, there is none more natural, more suitable, than the profession of a trained nurse, public or private, for sick-room or hospital. I say profession, because it needs to be undertaken as such—not as a mere crotchet or fancy, the outburst of youthful enthusiasm, or the refuge of temporary personal despair. The qualities which make a woman fit for it are rare—but perhaps less rare than we think, if only education and experience could draw them out. And their rewards are certain. How many incapable governesses, uncompanionable “companions,” and helpless poor gentlewomen, idle and forlorn encumbrances upon relatives and friends, might lead useful and happy lives, envired by the respect—the almost sanctity—which always surrounds a good “sick-nurse,” who is among all working women the rarest to find, and the most invaluable when found.

I felt this, when, after a little talk with Mr. Ashton Warner, the Secretary (who begged me to “say nothing about him” except giving his name as the person to whom checks must be made payable, a request which showed me how very much might be said about him, and his most conscientious and diligent work), I walked with Sister Catherine to the railway station. I had last been there exactly two years ago, on an errand

explained in a book of mine which I promised to send her.*

We spoke much as we went along, about the region she worked in, and her work therein, as well as of nurses' work generally, which, we agreed, opened a wide field for hundreds of women, in all classes, who long for work if only they could see their way clear to begin it.

"But," she said, "it ought to be well considered beforehand. To put one's hand to the plough, and look back, will never do. It is useless for any one to attempt nursing as a profession, either at ours or any other hospital, unless in the depth of her heart she has some motive like that which the Heckfords had. . . . She must do her work, not only out of pity to man, but for the love of God. Its trials are so great, its rewards so few and so doubtful, its discipline so unceasing, that nothing but the love of God—the feeling that all she does is done for him—will help her through."

As she spoke, with the Saint Catherine look strong in her face, there was no doubt but that my friend—if she will allow me to call her so—had, and would

* "A Legacy," in which so little is by the present writer, and so much by one who had cruel personal experience of what he wrote about and lived among—the terrible East End of London—that I hesitate not to advise all who read this to read it also.

have forever, that Divine help which is the strongest power in helping others. And so we bade one another a kindly farewell.

At the other terminus—having ingeniously contrived to lose myself, I was wandering forlornly about, my mind full of what I had just seen—when I felt a friendly touch. It was—most odd coincidence!—the very clergyman who had been with me through these regions of wretchedness two years ago.

“What in the world brings you here?” And I told him. “Oh, I know them well. I often go to the hospital. They take in heaps of our children. The good they do is something incalculable. Success to you! Help them the utmost you can.”

And I do not see a better way of doing it than by telling the simple story of what I saw and heard that day.

But how to turn it to practical use? Any one applying for the statistics and reports of the hospital may see in what form money may be supplied; by subscriptions, donations, or by establishing separate “cots.” There is the “Canadian” cot, given by a son “in memory of a beloved mother;” the “Daisy” cot, kept up by a mother for the sake of a dead child; the “Blackheath” and “Shortlands” cots, by united subscriptions. But many people are not able, or

willing, for large pecuniary outlay. They say they must feed their own children first, before they think about other people's. And they are right. If every one did his best for his own, we should have far less aggregate pauperism to fight against.

All cannot give money in charity, but there are three things which everybody can give—time, thought, and trouble. For instance, the superfluities of almost every family are necessities—often absolute blessings—in some other family. In a well-conducted household there should be no manner of waste—no “rubbish cupboards,” or “muddle drawers.” Every left-off garment or broken toy, all, in short, that has ceased to be wanted by the family itself, should be put at once into the “charity corner,” and thence distributed from time to time to whoever required the same. Children and servants—who are often only older children needing the same loving teaching—should be made to understand that nothing is to be destroyed—nothing wantonly wasted; that the benevolence which does most good is seldom that of mere money, but of thoughtfulness, economy, and self-denial.

The child who says, quite naturally, “Mamma, this frock is growing so tight! May I give it away to So-and-so?” and henceforward takes care to keep it clean, so that poor little So-and-so may receive it in

as good condition as circumstances allow;—or, still better, she who ere buying her doll a dress, pauses to consider whether the same money would not buy a frock for a little baby, buys it, and, still greater effort! sits down and makes it herself—these are the sort of children—ay, and their parents, for children are the reflection of their parents in these things—for whom I have written my account of the Children's Hospital.

So much good can be done, and at so little cost, if people only knew the way. For example—since not all families have children's clothes to give away, and those who have may have regular recipients for them—there is a place in Wales, a wholesale woollen warehouse, “Pryce Jones, Newtown, Montgomeryshire,” where, among other goods, very valuable for charity gifts, they send—carriage free to all parts of England—parcels of remnants, costing ten and sixpence and a guinea each, and containing material worth double that sum, to be made up into garments. How many little fingers, wearying through a wet Christmas holiday, and causing the perpetual cry, so worrying to mothers and nurses, “What can I do?” might be usefully employed on such, to the enjoyment of the young folks themselves and the infinite relief of their elders; if these latter have sense to see that the craving for “something to do”

is in a child, the best indication of being capable in after-life really to do something.

Do it, then, my children. Mend your broken toys, dress your discarded dolls, take care of your half-worn clothes, for the sake of these poor little children, less fortunate than yourselves. Waste nothing, destroy nothing. Remember that everything is of use to somebody—down to the very “rags” which are needed to bind up, not only a cut finger, but many more grievous wounds.

We cannot help the deluge. We cannot stem the flood of misery and sin—misery in consequence of sin—which fills this our world. Why it should be, we know not; it is, and we must face it. But God, who once saw fit to “drown all the little babies”—that is, to take them safe out of unknown suffering into his eternal arms—does not drown them now; he leaves them for us to try and save them. Let us do it. Without more words, let me end as I began, with that one pathetic appeal—“Save the children!”

SINLESS SABBATH-BREAKING

SINLESS SABBATH-BREAKING.

I AM no Sabbatarian; that is, I do not believe in the Jewish Sabbath, which, if kept at all, should be kept on a Saturday, and is, to my mind, no more binding on us Christians than the Feast of Weeks, of Tabernacles, or other Mosaic ceremonials; necessary to the world in its infancy, not now. But I do believe in Sunday: the first day of the week—the Lord's Day—on which he rose from the dead, and “opened the gates of heaven to all believers.” Unbelievers, even, often find a certain peaceful sanctity in a periodical day of rest; but to us, our Master's confessed servants, it is a peculiar delight and privilege to remember his day and keep it holy.

How?—It is one of the most difficult questions of our time. In what way can we Christians—real, earnest, openly professing Christians—“break the Sabbath”—that is, the Mosaic bonds which so heavily oppress us—and yet not become heathens, either in name or thought, nor cast from us that blessed

safeguard of one day in the week when the dizzy round of both labor and pleasure has a pause ; which gives to all who desire it at least a chance of remembering those better things which raise them above the beasts that perish ?

Let me preface a brief word or two of argument by a still briefer word of experience.

“ We must do at Rome as the Romans do—so of course you won’t go to church.”

This was said to me in Paris one summer Sunday morning—too summer-like to incline one to spend it in any English chapel, amid close air, feeble preaching, and feebler music. So as there is some truth in the aforesaid axiom, and it is often good to worship with any worshipping Christians among whom we may chance to be—we went to early mass in the nearest church.

That gathering of all classes into a crowded, earnest, devout congregation—how it startles people accustomed to believe in the “ wickedness ” of Paris ! Where in London could we find the like ?—so many hundreds who rise early from their beds to go and pray—and evidently do pray—to whom, or for what, God knows. But he does know—and hear. And the mere act of faith, in this worldly and sceptical age, is a touching and ennobling thing. Any one who despises “ foreigners ” and their religion should

just go to a Paris church—any church—at eight o'clock on a Sunday morning; he will come out, I think, a little ashamed of himself.

Still more so should he choose to "assist" at the eleven o'clock high mass, which we did not do, for the crowd was too great. We went instead to regale our eyes with the heavenly pictures, the Madonnas and Holy Children, the saints and angels innumerable, who smiled serenely from the silent walls of the almost deserted Louvre.

"It is usually empty at this hour," said a young Catholic lady who was with me. "But by-and-by, when mass is over, the Louvre, and the Salon also, which is open on Sundays free, are thronged to overflowing. We all go to church, but when church is over we amuse ourselves. Why not? Surely *le bon Dieu* likes to see his children happy, especially on a Sunday?"

An unanswerable question. And the Sabbath silence of the Louvre answered another question—that the opening of picture-galleries does not involve the emptying of churches, for those who really wish to go to church. Those who require to be driven there had better stop away.

"No, we do not keep Sunday in Paris as you in London," said my friend. "There is no *tristesse* in our religion. We worship with all our hearts while

we are in church. But when we come out, we do not think it wrong to smile."

Nor did I, on such a smiling day. And when, after the hour of *déjeuner* had succeeded the hours of prayer, we met all Paris turning out again, evidently bent on enjoying itself, we made up our minds to do the same. It is so easy to be grumpy and sad—so rare, so difficult, to be happy in this world. Surely its Maker did not mean it so. Surely he meant us to be cheerful—even on a Sunday.

So we joined the throng that was flowing on, wave after wave, into the Jardin des Tuileries.

Evidently the garden of the people, of whom hundreds kept pouring in, singly, in pairs, in families—monsieur, madame, and the little ones—for, say what you will, Jacques Bonhomme is essentially domestic; quite as much so, in his own way, as Mr. John Bull, over whom he has some advantages. Jacques drinks very little, and he does not beat madame, or kick her to death with his *sabots*—indeed, as a rule, he lets her have pretty much her own way in guiding the family, which she does uncommonly well. To prove this fact it was only necessary to watch that most respectable crowd—of whom none were above the *bourgeois* rank, very few better than *ouvriers*—that terrible class whom we are accustomed to think

of as Communists, *pétroleuses*, etc. Yet how innocently merry they looked! how well and neatly they were dressed! no frowsy finery and tawdry dirt, as one too often sees in a Regent's Park or Hyde Park Sunday throng. And nothing could be more polite and friendly than their behavior to one another, and to every one around—the ceaseless odd little bows—the incessant “monsieurs” and “madames”—even between the very poorest. We may laugh, but, for all that, courtesy is a kind of Christianity. And despite that sad blackened ruin before us, and sadder memories of only a few years back, let us hope that a Paris which has so speedily risen from its ashes has in it, with all drawbacks, an eternal vitality of good, which gives it the power still to rise.

Where shall we go? All is so fresh and pleasant, the trees wear still a tender green, the sun is brilliant, not broiling. The streets and buildings outside are sharply defined in the clear atmosphere, and the ever-moving crowd within goes ebbing and flowing like a great bright sea. Verily even Paris looks charming on this Sunday afternoon, especially in the Tuileries Gardens.

Just ahead is a sort of nebula in the throng—a kind of coagulation, chiefly of children—to which another child is naturally drawn.

“Mamma! a theatre! Marionettes! May we go? Only think of our going to the theatre on a Sunday.”

But nothing could be more innocent than that open-air dramatic entertainment, the inner benches of which “*messieurs et mesdames*” were politely implored to keep “*réservés aux enfants*.” And truly a more rapturous circle of “*enfants*” was never seen—yet withal so neat and clean, so eminently respectable, that the most particular of English mothers need not have hesitated to place in it her English child. Not even when the smiling white-capped manageress, having collected her few sous each from the little audience, the comedy began. I forget it now as a whole—it was something about a man being taken to prison, and his wife or mother following him on a donkey, from the back of which she was always slipping off. But it afforded ecstatic delight at the time, and is still thought of without the slightest compunction, accompanied by the beaming faces and shrill laughter of those French children and their English neighbor. Endless were the jokes, and keenly appreciated, but there was nothing that one would have disliked a child to see or hear, week-day or Sunday. For, as I have always tried to make clear to children, what is wrong on a Sunday must be

wrong all through the week, and therefore should not be done at all.

We certainly did nothing wrong in our next proceeding—viz., eating under a tree a most innocent and delicious strawberry ice, produced for some small number of sous from an ornamental erection, where a young woman and a boy administered to the thirsty and hungry every desirable luxury except strong drink. Bonbons, cakes, chocolate, syrup, lemonade, and, above all, huge glasses of new milk, were consumed by young and old with much satisfaction. But there was no beer, no gin, no brandy, and consequently no ill-manners, no squabbling and fighting, none of the brutalizing elements which would have made it absolutely impossible for a lady and child to mingle in an English holiday crowd. In this one there was no difficulty whatever. The good French mothers regarded quite tenderly the little French-speaking English maiden, and were delighted to have their own children noticed. I heard the whole history, from birth upwards, of a certain precocious “Jean,” who was just able to totter forth, sous in hand, and bargain for his own glass of milk, and found myself shortly afterwards watching with the deepest interest the first steps of a pretty little “Margot,” evidently an eldest child, who was lured from the paternal hands to walk at

least two yards towards the kneeling young mother, at which performance a little ring of amused spectators broke into a murmur of applause.

Very silly, perhaps, but very harmless, and scarcely to be denounced as Sabbath-breaking; no more than the endless little games planned and played by the groups of children round about the fathers and mothers looking on. For, as I have said, Jacques Bonhomme is an essentially domestic animal, and his evident pride in madame and the children, dressed in all their Sunday best, was a pretty sight to see.

Nor—let Sabbatarians say what they will—was it an ugly or an ominous sight—the hundred or two of people, decently, nay, elegantly dressed, who, occupying many rows of chairs, sat chatting and laughing, waiting with the good-humored patience peculiar to “foreigners” for the commencement of a concert—probably military, for the empty orchestra had a decided military air. The music, too, was doubtless military and secular, though I cannot say, for I did not wait to hear it. But, whatever it was, I honestly think it would do the audience no harm, and that to sit listening to it, in the fresh air and sunshine, at the cost of two sous per chair, was a good deal cheaper, not to say more sanitary, to mind and body, than crowding round the bar of

a gin-palace, hoping thereby to kill a Sunday afternoon.

For, it must be remembered, both in London and Paris the people—the “lower classes,” as we call them—have no pianofortes to play, no pictures to look at, no libraries to read in, no gardens to walk in; none of those indoor luxuries which make our “Sunday at home” the pleasantest day of the week if we so choose. But do we? Then why should most people feel, as was honestly owned to me once by an excellent and religious lady, a clergyman’s wife, “We are obliged to have service so evenings. People are glad to go to church twice—it gives them something to do—otherwise Sunday is such a long, dull day.”

Did the Lord of it mean this? Does he wish us to keep his day in such a fashion that we find it “dull,” and are glad when it is over? Can it please him that we are driven into his house partly by *ennui*, and partly by that “fear of hell” which is said to be

“The hangman’s whip,
Which keeps the wretch in order?”

Is it not possible for Christians—let me again affirm that I am not writing as an unbeliever, a heretic, or even a “worldling,” as the pietists phrase it, but as an earnest Christian woman—is it not pos-

sible for us Christians to find some way of keeping the Lord's day, publicly as in private, so that people may love it, instead of condemning, ignoring, or absolutely hating it? "I hate Sunday" is the cry of hundreds and thousands of strictly-brought-up children, who, when they grow into men and women, will doubtless become the fiercest and most reckless of anti-Sabbatarians. Is this the fault of the Giver of the Sabbath, or of ourselves?

A periodical Sabbath—a day of rest, if nothing more—is an institution so valuable that the most earnest sceptic would scarcely wish to abolish it. But between its total abolition and its Mosaic observance is there no rational medium? Can we not break the Sabbath—I mean the Jewish rigidity of its bondage—in a sinless way?

Many people think not. Only lately a body of influential gentlemen, doubtless all having libraries of their own to sit and read in all Sunday, if they wish, closed a public library to working-men on Sundays—most conscientiously—and using the old argument of the "thin end of the wedge," which will apply to every attempted reformation in this world. There is no freedom which might not lead to anarchy—no change of belief which could not ultimately become atheism.

But nevertheless these well-meaning gentlemen

shut the library, even as the proprietors of the Zoological and Horticultural Gardens and the shareholders of the Crystal Palace shut their domains save to themselves and their friends. The British Museum, National Gallery, and other public buildings being also closed, the London workman has absolutely nowhere to go on a Sunday, with or without his family (except to church, and he cannot be at church all day long), unless he goes to the streets, the parks, and the public-houses; and for the great part of the year our climate narrows these three resorts down to one—the public-house.

There are evils for which substitution, even the substitution of a not unmitigated good, is not merely the best, but the sole remedy. I deliberately say that the only way to shut up our gin-palaces, beer-shops, and consequently our prisons and penitentiaries, would be to open as many places of cheap and lawful amusement as possible, and especially on a Sunday. Not perhaps for the whole of Sunday. Let the morning be kept as sacred as the most earnest church-goer could desire; but after two P.M. let the day be made both by law and custom at once a holy day and a holiday. Open to the “lower classes,” as we call them, every possible door of amusement and instruction—the British Museum, the National Gallery, and all similar institutions, as well

as the Zoological and Horticultural Gardens, and the Crystal Palace, under due restrictions. In short, give to the poor, as a right, what the rich have long enjoyed by reason of money.

True, these changes would entail expense and trouble—every good deed always does. An extra number of officials must be provided, who cannot have their day of rest. But far better that a small number of persons should work on a Sunday than that a far greater number should waste their Sunday in worse than idleness—crime. The uneducated, or half-educated, classes are exactly like children; if you do not find them something good to do, they will assuredly find out for themselves something that is bad.

Many urge, that even were all these sources of popular amusement open to him, it would be of no use—the British workman would not go; that he actually prefers the public-house, or at best the heavy once-a-week dinner and beer, and the snooze at the fireside after it—if he has a fireside. But how few have? What hundreds of young men and young women are turned adrift every Sunday, with literally nothing to do and nowhere to go, except for the Sunday excursion trains, which have proved to be by no means an unmixed good—quite the contrary. Rational, wholesome, cheap amusement, close

at hand—and after he has had his dinner at home, so that there need be no money spent upon eating and drinking—would be infinitely better and safer for the London artisan than “six hours at the seaside,” whence he returns with an empty purse, a full stomach, an aching head, and a heavy heart, to pay throughout the week the penalty of his Sunday’s “pleasure.”

But because this sort of pleasure is wrong, and would be equally wrong every day in the week as well as Sunday, is it impossible to find any form of sinless enjoyment which should make Sunday a happy day to our children, our dependents, our “poorer brethren,” whom we preach to out of pulpits on the duty of keeping the Sabbath, but never attempt to show how this may be done in a right, rejoicing, and yet innocent way?

Cheerfulness, loving-kindness, the rational and wholesome exercise of all our powers and affections, constitute, in the belief of many who in this sceptical age are not ashamed to call themselves Christians, the best and only form of keeping, not the Jewish Sabbath, but the Lord’s day. Could there not be found (and these few words are cast adrift like seeds in the hope that there may be found), for our humbler and weaker brethren—the ignorant are always weak—some righteous way of eliminating the good

from the evil of a Continental Sunday—some form of what I call “sinless Sabbath-breaking?” Then surely many of us would respond to Herrick’s familiar lines—

“ And, *having prayed together*, we
Will go with you along.”

DE MORTUIS

DE MORTUIS.

De mortuis nil nisi bonum is an axiom not always just or possible to be carried out, seeing that—

“The evil that men do lives after them ;

The good is oft interred with their bones.”

But this truth also must be received with limitations, since good has, of its very essence, a longer existence than evil. Often, too, the noblest parts of a man's nature are so obscured and hampered by that “fleshly garment of decay” which he wore during life that death alone tears the veil down and allows the world to see him as he is—to recognize all that was beautiful and lovable in him—to trace not merely the end, but the windings and difficulties of the way ; and, whether the result was victory or defeat, to be made acquainted with the full bitterness of the struggle. It is this, the thoroughly human interest which we all of us feel in the story of another human life, which makes few forms of literature more attractive and more valuable than that rarest of books, a good biography.

That any biography should be perfect, complete, and exhaustive, even in its outward details, is in the very nature of things an impossibility. Even the most commonplace facts are, we all know, only too difficult to attain, since almost every mind receives a fact in a different way, and represents it with corresponding variety, not to say inaccuracy. Thus the mere external history of a man's life is not easy to get at; the internal—who shall even guess at that?

Most of us know Oliver Wendell Holmes's shrewd definition of each man's triune individuality. "1st. The real John; known only to his Maker. 2d. John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him. 3d. Thomas's ideal John; never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either." Then the question arises, if this said "John" be, even in his lifetime, so unknowable and undescribable, who shall venture to write his biography when he is dead?

It would be, truly, a daring deed for either friend or foe, but for one saving fact. When a man is once gone, time so speedily clears away all human testimony concerning him that, after a few years, the only evidence left is that safest of all—circumstantial evidence; such as the prominent facts of his life, undeniable though given in the barest out-

line; his letters; and the traditional impression of his personality left behind upon those who knew him, which is likely to become deeper and more exact the further back it grows. This the more so in proportion to the real greatness of the man. You can see and appreciate a decent hillock at a few yards' distance, but it takes many miles before you can trace the summit of a mountain; and even if traced, the chances are that its outline is so varied and varying that you may make many a mistake concerning it before you arrive at even an approximation of the truth.

So it is with most men who are, we will not even say superior to, but, at any rate, different from, the common run of men. They have to die before we know them. Not perfectly even then, though often far better than in their lifetime; and any one who helps us to know them ever so imperfectly has contributed no little to the general wealth of literature in the world.

These thoughts have been elicited by a book,* the last of several—corrected editions of and extracts from his works—ending with this final memorial of a man from whom, at one time, his friends and the public at large expected so much and apparently received so little, and now will receive

* "Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell." Edited by E. J.

nothing more; for the career is ended—the work, little or much, is all done.

Probably there never was a better-loved or better-hated—at any rate, better-abused—man during his lifetime, than Sydney Dobell. Bursting into sudden notoriety by his remarkable drama, “The Roman;” watched hopefully by all the critics as the new poet of the age; then disappointing the expectations of most by his incomprehensible next work, “Balder—the First Part” (the second part, which might have elucidated it, being, alas, never written); afterwards dwindling down through “England in time of War” and other lyrics of fragmentary kind to a style of writing, poetry or prose, of which the few published specimens were, to the ordinary mind, almost wholly incomprehensible; until, after a long, sad silence, during which he was almost forgotten, came the news of his death in the prime of his days.

Then the half-regretful public remembered him for a little space. Notices were written about him—criticisms, fair and unfair, intelligent or unintelligent, upon his writings. Some few recalled his personality, too remarkable to be altogether passed over, even after a good many years—how he had appeared in London and Edinburgh society as a young man of unmistakable intellectual power, much culture, great charm of manner, and conver-

sational capabilities of a kind which delighted some, annoyed others, but could not be ignored by any. A shrewd observer has been heard to say that the only time he ever saw Thomas Carlyle "talked down," and this in the sweetest, most respectful, but most persistent way, was by Sydney Dobell.

That he had great gifts, promising a career of no ordinary sort, his friends—and he had many—loudly proclaimed; but his enemies—and he was of too strong an individuality not to make a few—declared that these gifts were neutralized by an amount of egotism and eccentricity, both as to character, mode of life, and opinions, which would forever prevent his being the great man which his appreciators believed he would be, nay, was. And while both sides held their ground, and gave their sentiments with equal effusion—for he was a person whom nobody could half love—while he exacted and received from his friends nothing short of total devotion, and his opponents condemned him with a virulent dislike that was almost comical—Dobell gradually vanished from public ken. For years he was only heard of from time to time, as an invalid recluse watching over a lovely and equally invalid wife, till, at last, when the literary world had almost ceased to remember his existence, he died.

Whether or not Sydney Dobell was a man of

genius—whether his writings, which have been pronounced by some to contain passages as grand as Milton, and to evince a knowledge of humanity not unworthy of Shakespeare; and been condemned by others as hopelessly obscure, long-winded, and puerile—will live for posterity, this paper does not attempt to decide. The poems are open to all—every one can read and judge for himself.

But his personality, that *ego* which we are all so anxious to get at after a man is dead; that life-story which is often more pathetic, more interesting, more deeply instructive than any book he has ever written; this would soon have vanished out of the very fondest memories, had it not been for such a book as the one just named, which preserves, alike for friends and foes, the image of the real Sydney Dobell much clearer than any he projected for himself during his lifetime.

That portrait even his severest critics, his unkindest detractors, must allow to be a very striking one.

Sydney Thompson Dobell was the eldest son of a father who counted his lineage from the days of the cavaliers, and of a mother whose great pride was *her* father, a man of the people, but of power enough to originate and head for many years a very remarkable sect, who called themselves the Church of God, and were called by others Free-thinking

Christians. A description given of this sect, its creed, its growth, and its decadence, is a very interesting contribution to the history of theological opinion.

That the influences under which he was born and brought up strongly affected the boy from earliest infancy cannot be doubted. When he was between four and five years old his father wrote of him thus :

“ ‘As he had heard the word “God,” I have allowed him to speak of him by the term “the Good Being,” which I find good in its effects, preventing the frequent use and, by giving a just, definite idea, preventing many foolish notions and sayings. I have reason to expect that Sydney will be eminent for a sound understanding, correct ideas, useful talent, and good dispositions.’

“ ‘He also records the child’s facility in rhyming, a favorite diversion between them being for the father to make a line to which the little son promptly answered by one rhyming with it.

“ ‘In 1830, when Sydney is six years old, he is described as having ‘rosy cheeks, clear complexion, a very playful mouth ; indeed, the whole face when lighted up is beautifully sensible, innocent, and good. When serious, or, rather, when puzzling his brain, a scowl of brow renders his face rather plain and uninteresting to strangers.’ Then is added, ‘His power of expressing his ideas is remarkably strong, and his ideas are very numerous and far beyond his years.’ His quickness in ‘seizing a piece of wit’ and great enjoyment of it, is also a subject of comment. In 1832—the boy being then eight years old—his father writes :

“ ‘I have never known Sydney to tell an untruth. . . . His distinctions sometimes are so nice and correct, that to an inattentive

person he might give an impression of untruth. . . . He has a scientific inclination, and is quick in observing mechanism. . . . He learns astronomy. . . . He attends the Sunday meeting (of the members of Mr. Thompson's Church), and I find understands much that he hears.'"

These indications of character in a child of ten years old roused in his parents that tendency to "regard him, and through his early years even brought him to regard himself, as having a special and almost apostolic mission," which "in a more ordinary man would have fostered an exclusive arrogance fatal to the real usefulness of life. The generous nobility of Sydney's nature saved him from this worst evil, but he did not pass through the ordeal unscathed. His precocity was stimulated, his emotions exercised, his nervous system overstrained, and, during the first period of his career, the isolating influences of his home-life hampered his social powers."

So writes his biographer; but it may be questioned whether the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the son was not as much at fault, if fault there was, as the upbringing of the parents. More children are ruined by lack of love, sympathy, and wholesome praise, than by a superabundance of the three—which Sydney must always have found in his mother, a rarely good and noble woman. That his was

not an idle life these passages, taken at random from his diary at the age of fourteen, sufficiently show :

“October 24.—Up at half-past six. Wrote some ‘Napoleon’ in the evening. Description of true eloquence. Sir A. B. Falkner here for an hour.

“October 26.—Rose at seven, learned lessons and did the business of the morning till half-past one; dinner. Afternoon—learned lessons and sent out some wine; read Blackstone ‘De jura Personarum’ till half-past five. Tea. Read Blackstone till half-past six. Then Mr. — (tutor).

“October 28.—Sunday. Out in the garden till one; out again till three. Read till four Dillon’s ‘Essays on Religious Worship,’ a work which enters into its subject, leaves no hills unsurmounted, and no depths unexplored (!) Played chess for half an hour, and five o’clock tea. After tea, papa read Shakespeare aloud for a couple of hours. Play, ‘Merchant of Venice’—one of his most exciting plays in parts for the criticalness of the situations, but spoiled in others by the low language of Launcelot, and the coarse jests which abound in the lower characters.

“October 29.—Out on business till one. Have quite forgotten how the afternoon passed, besides the usual routine of business. After tea wrote a satirical piece entitled ‘Hope.’

“October 30.—Up at seven. After breakfast subjected my squib to the universal critic, papa, and we two, after two alterations, one expungement, and the addition of a verse, pronounced it good, copied and signed it ‘Corrector,’ folded it, and directed it to the *Free Press* Office. . . . After tea read some more of ‘Merchant of Venice’ aloud.

“October 31.—Up at half-past seven. Business of the morning as usual till half-past eight; breakfast. Went out till eleven to see Collins about bottles. Came home, wrote bills; dinner at one. After

dinner began posting the accounts of the month. After tea finished 'Merchant of Venice' aloud."

Read this, ye lazy lads, who cost your parents hundreds per annum, yet contrive to learn as little and play as much as you possibly can, and wonder at this boy, who had never been to either school or college, who at fourteen had already for two years gone to business with his father, getting his education finished how and when he could. This family of ten—five sons and five daughters—had a hard battle with the world. Migrating from Cranbrook, in Kent, to London, and thence to Cheltenham, it settled there, living in great seclusion. For, besides his peculiar doctrines, John Dobell, this descendant of Cavalier soldiers, was a tradesman, first a hide merchant and then a wine merchant, and as such tacitly tabooed both by the religious and fashionable "sets" of that very exclusive town. Not that he cared for this, being so imbued with his "separatist" theories, and with the impossibility of "the Church," as its adherents fondly called it, ever mingling with "the world." But still, the complete isolation of the Dobells, while it kept them simple, pure, and high-minded to the last degree, and while held by many of their neighbors to be almost beyond the pale of Christianity, helped them to carry out literally all the primitive Christian virtues—no doubt

stimulated in all, but in Sydney, the eldest, especially, a strong originality, and a persistent putting forward and clinging to their own opinions, which could not fail to mark them out as a very remarkable family.

As precocious in his affections as in his brains, the next epoch in the boy's life, which colored it to the very end, was his falling in love, at fifteen, with a girl of his own age, Emily Fordham, the beautiful daughter of a Cambridgeshire squire, who was also one of "the Church" of Samuel Thompson's founding. With the unworldliness which characterized it and most of its members, the parents on both sides consented at once to the engagement, and to the marriage five years afterwards, when the bridegroom was twenty and the bride twenty-one. The courtship, as here told, is a perfect idyll in its way. How Sydney looked back upon it the following passage, from one of his letters to an intimate friend, will show:

"Here at last I am at peace. Here in the scene of my early and only love; here, where the old days look out on me from every cottage window, murmur to me in every one of these old pines, whisper in the tall evergreens (where we so often sat together), and under the broad green sod of this quiet lawn lie buried but unforgotten. I cannot tell you the ineffable happiness with which once a year I come to this place. To these placid fields, murmurous—I have no other word—with sheep-bells; this solitary hamlet, with its church beside

the green, where for five years of happiest courtship I was the ever-welcomed hero of village tattle and romance; these silent lanes, which once were not so silent; this dark old manor-house, to me so full of sunshine, round which the thoughts of my long absences used to walk day and night. Her father lost it the year we were married, after a lawsuit of a quarter of a century; but happily it is still in friendly hands, and I can still sleep in the room where she was born."

The young couple began life with very narrow means, and the health of both, especially the wife, was exceedingly delicate. Indeed, from this time dates the chronicle of continual illness and suffering, above all that vicarious suffering which is hardest to bear, and which, for him, ended but with life. To most men this would have been the extinguishment of all intellectual growth, all delight in life. But Dobell's extraordinary force of will, vitality of brain, and power of dividing himself in two, so to speak, of conquering the body through the spirit, of analyzing his own sensations, and keeping up a mental existence quite distinct from the life of the heart, carried him through seas of affliction in which a feebler bark would have been totally swamped.

His own letters, and the testimony of all his friends concerning him, go to prove that, full of trial as his life was, there was in him little or none of that morbidness, or even melancholy, to which men of genius are supposed to be prone. "Spas-

modic" as his poetry was considered, he himself was of a thoroughly cheerful and healthy mind, and there remained with him and in him to the very last a most touching enjoyment of all that was left him to enjoy—a permanent sunshininess of nature—which must have been one of his greatest charms in the eyes of those who loved him.

And these were not few. For if he exacted much, he gave much, especially to women, with whom his friendships were many and sincere, and whom he treated, high and low, near or distant, with the chivalrous tenderness of a stainless heart, as seeing in all womanhood the reflection of his own ideal of it—his wife.

His family relations seem to have been rarely fortunate, tender, and close.

"He was loved by both his parents with unusual intensity; their admiration of him, and expectations from him, were very high, and at the same time very clearly defined, and any substitution of an ideal of his own for that which from his childhood had been held up to him, naturally brought upon him remonstrance, passionate, because the love out of which it sprang was passionate.

"A sentence pencilled in one of his early note-books may be quoted here. 'Habit of obedience necessary to be early formed. Therefore, before reason can comprehend the will of God, another will is necessary; but when reason is gained, God becomes the Parent, and the parent sinks to brotherhood.'"

When we compare this with an extract from a

letter to his eldest sister, written after the sudden rush of popularity which followed the appearance of "The Roman," and the changed life which ensued therefrom, it is easy to see that Sydney Dobell must have been a very difficult person to guide or influence.

"You think I am improved lately. As a moral and intellectual whole, perhaps I am. But I shall never cease to look back on the four or five years preceding my illness with a kind of self-reverence—as to an impossible saintdom, to which I would not return, but which I can never equal on this side. I see that I have a wider mission and a rougher excellence before me; but I cannot look back without a melancholy interest to the years when I never thought or said a word but under the very eyes of God."

Strong language, and capable of great misconception, as no doubt the writer was often misconstrued. His *ego*—that is, his ideal of the self that he wished to be—was enormous, but it was mixed with no petty vanity, or desire of worldly admiration. Such could not exist in a man whose aim it was to live "under the very eyes of God." But these characteristics in him, so patent from very childhood, make it clear that the mistakes of his youth, in both physical and moral up-bringing, were his own mistakes, and not, as has been sometimes asserted, his parents'. In great things and small, he inherited his grandfather Thompson's resolute will

and strong self-consciousness, together with a certain iconoclastic spirit, which, with all his sweetness and almost angelic purity of heart, must have made him, even from boyhood, what parents call "extremely difficult to manage." Add to this the inevitable circumstances of his daily life, being sent to business at an age when most boys are only just sent to school, and, all his education being private, deprived entirely of that wholesome friction with the outside world which is an incalculable advantage to both boy and man—and it is easy to understand how and why Sydney Dobell became what he was. Not his own ideal Sydney Dobell, certainly; but as compared with ordinary mankind, most of whom have no ideal at all, a man whom nobody could overlook, and though many might criticise and even dislike, nobody could in any way despise. Nay, even the very egotism, or egoism—there is a vital difference between the two—of which he was widely, perhaps not unjustly accused, becomes pathetically excusable, when, after his death, one reads such a sentence as this—his answer to a correspondent who had hoped that the unfavorable reviews of "Balder" would teach him "humility."

"If it be humility to be as nothing before God; if it be humility, not as a dutiful theory, but as an actual involuntary consciousness, to ignore the possession of a single substantive power or quality, to

live, move, speak, but as the helpless instrument of the One Omnipotent sole life, sole good, there are few humbler men alive than I."

"The Roman" was written and published when he was but twenty-five. "Balder" followed soon after. These are his only complete poems; though they were followed by a good many sonnets and lyrics, especially "England in Time of War," which contains passages of unparalleled beauty. And at thirty-five the poet—"spasmodic," eccentric, unintelligible as his writings may be called, few will deny to him that title—the poet published his last work. This single decade, then, is all that posterity has to judge him by.

The human story of these ten years, if externally uneventful, is very interesting. Literature was only the delight of his leisure; he still earned his daily bread as a wine-merchant, being, it is recorded, a shrewd and clever man of business. He kept up an æsthetic, picturesque, and hospitable home, in which he carried to the utmost limits an almost lavish system of alms-giving and general benevolence, on an income which for a long time was rarely over, sometimes under, four hundred a year. The necessity of many wanderings, in England, Scotland, and abroad, chiefly in quest of health for his invalid wife, gave some variety to a life that otherwise would have been painfully monotonous. Everywhere he

seems to have been surrounded by devoted friends, of whom, among the women, a certain "M.," who is described by him as "the light of the house," and another who is called "our adopted daughter," stand out prominently; while among his intimate and affectionate masculine correspondents and allies are George Gilfillan, Professor Blackie, the Rev. J. Brown Paton, Alexander Smith, Dr. Westland Marston, and John Nichol.

Dobell's correspondence must have been very voluminous, and it is much to be regretted that the book contains so little of it. His is an exquisitely polished epistolary style, perhaps even too perfect, as in its striving after originality it sacrifices that frank simplicity which must be given up if people write their commonest letters "with an eye to posterity." Whether or not he did so, posterity must needs be grateful for such a charming result as the following birthday letter "to a young sister :"—

"ABERCROMBIE PLACE, *April 11th*, 1854.

"I have not forgotten your wish, you see, and I send you a kiss for it and for the way in which it was expressed.

"May my letters be indeed to you like 'messages from Paradise,' except that I trust they may not be so 'few and far between.' What the Paradisaical element in them can be I am at a loss to guess, but be they terrestrial and black as midnight clay, may your love, dear little-great sister, ever as now transfigure them to the texture of that higher region wherefrom all love descends.

“There’s a long, complicated sentence for you! Strange enough to be written to a little sister, if I did not know that that little sister had already so much the mind of a woman. ‘The mind of a woman!’ There, indeed, is a text for birthday wishes. God give you one day the ‘mind of a woman.’ This is a better wish than if I had said even the mind of an angel, for God does all things in an ordained progression, and the order of his providence is first ‘woman,’ then ‘angel.’ Therefore, you will neglect nothing that completes the true character of woman, nor think anything unimportant that is a part of it, however small; conscious that the God who created womanhood can alone know the real value of anything that he has made, and that sometimes in our human estimates ‘the last may be first and the first last.’

“Now the ideal of a woman’s character is *beautiful goodness*. Not goodness only, but beautiful goodness. You will say, perhaps, that all goodness is beautiful; and so it is when in perfection; but, like many other things in nature, it requires to be completely and fully developed before you perceive all its qualities. Summer fruit is summer fruit, even before it is ripe; there are all the main substances present in it which constitute a fruit—stone, skin, pulp, juice; but it is only when warmed into perfection that it becomes flushed with color, tinted with bloom, sweet to the taste, and beautiful to the eye.

“So with goodness. Goodness is goodness also long before it is ripe; and many people think it the better the sourer and bitterer it is. But you, dear sister, will be content with nothing less than goodness sunshined into beauty.

“Never be careless of anything that is beautiful. It may seem a trifle, but beauty is divine, you know, and God can dwell as easily in an atom as in heaven. The bloom on the plum, the flush on the rose, the immaculacy of the snowdrop, the intensity of the light—these trifles sometimes make the difference between beauty and non-beauty.

"You are now entering upon one of the most touching and precious times of life, when the child begins to blossom into the maiden—I was going to say 'girl,' but we have called you girl a long, long while. Your birthday comes precisely at that very age of the growing year. May the God of goodness and beauty, who never fails to flower the spring into summer with harvest, find you as obedient as the dutiful earth, and bless and glorify you likewise. And long seasons hence may he gather your wheat into his garner, that you yourself, relieved from that burden of works and duties, may burst forth again into the spring which is everlasting!"

Take another, "to his father and mother;" one of those dearly valued "Sunday letters," which he wrote so long and faithfully to the beloved family home at Detmore:

"SOUTH CLERMISTON, *October 19.*

"Oh that I could be home with a thought, and see the silent, golden, English autumn, though there are things at home that I long to see far more. In every season, the difference between England and Scotland is distinct and characteristic, but in none, I think, more than in this. At home the wide, grand, calm, melancholy time dies 'like an emperor standing,' and falls a corpse of gold. Here the perpetual flurry of the weather pulls it to pieces, like a traveller in a flock of wolves. At home, every stage and age of death may be seen together on the tree, till some November night brings them all down at once; here, a ghastly green, that grows daily more spectral, carries an old-maid sort of horrid youth into the very jaws of the grave. Every day finds the trees thinner and thinner, but still grinning with a grizzly green."

Those landscape letters, vivid with brilliantly minute word-painting, are interspersed by others

of an ethical kind, full of his own strong, clearly defined, and never-concealed opinions.

“In old times gentleness, the one comprehensive caste, depended solely on blood. Given the blood, and nothing within the wide limits of virtue and honor could degrade the gentleman. To believe otherwise he would have resented as mortal insult to the noble liberty of gentle birth. To be made or unmade by external circumstances (of moral indifference) was the characteristic and villainous condition of the serf. ‘Gentlemen,’ therefore, came to be the social standard; and we find ‘gentlemen’ employed in the free and varied manner that might be expected from the liberal consciousness of unalienable rank. We never went so far in England as abroad, where nobles, without loss of caste, might be found as grooms and menials; but the difference was not in the principle, but in the degrees of application.”

The natural outcome of these beliefs is in the following beautiful letter “to a sister—the wife of a ‘man in business:’”

“A great deal has been written and talked lately about the possibility of gentlemen in business; but what would do more than a library of books would be one really complete, thoroughly furnished, unmistakable *illustration*. When I saw you, or thought of you rather, and your dear husband, settled for fourteen years in your beautiful ‘Moorlands,’ it seemed to me, here is precisely the golden opportunity; here are husband and wife, father and mother, just fitted by original qualities and education (for if either element is absent the experiment can’t be perfect) to realize, if they try, the ideal home and family of a gentleman; and just so placed by the fortune of life as to make such a combination of circumstances the very Q. E. D. for which we are all looking. I don’t say it is to be done

without difficulty, but I do say, and believe, that you have the power to do this thing if you set yourselves to it, and resolve that morally, intellectually, and æsthetically, you will be content with nothing short of the highest you can attain. And to make this illustration perfect, it is almost necessary that it should be representative, *i. e.*, that it should depend for its beauty on things that are not in their nature exceptional, but can be shared more or less by every well-organized, well-educated member of the great middle class. A husband and father carrying on successfully the practical affairs of work-a-day life, and depending for his nobility of station simply on the high degree of excellence to which he carries his duties, occupations, tastes, and pleasures. A wife and mother content in the same manner with simply trying to live out Christian ladyhood to its fairest and noblest possible—these are the two heads of such a household as I want to see; such a household as may enable me to answer to the incredulous, ‘Ah, my dear poet, a very pretty dream indeed!’ with an introduction to my brother and sister at ——.”

How the poet, who was himself also a man of business, carried out the theories he preached, his “favorite brother” thus writes:

“Whatever he (Sydney) did, he did well. In business he was practical and shrewd; and while he had time and strength to direct, his affairs prospered. . . . Characteristic of him were his simplicity and courage in carrying out the daily round of business duties, that must, of course, have been uncongenial and even sometimes antagonistic to his personal tastes and feelings. He worked on in accordance with a code of principles which he applied to the acts necessary to gaining daily bread. . . . He held that the first business and profession of every man is to be a Christian gentleman, and that the acts and processes by which he gains money should always be a secondary part of his life and character; that, consequently, so long as

the occupation is honest, it does not much signify what that occupation happens to be; it can be made mean or dignified according to the personal character of the man who pursues it. He, therefore, did not attempt to escape from the business he had been brought up to pursue. He was strictly abstemious in his habits, but he considered the use of wines and spirits as a legitimate luxury, and that to condemn the use for fear of its abuse might accord with Mohammedan or Buddhist morality, but was inconsistent with the tenor of Christian philosophy. He held, moreover, that what was allowed to the rich should not be withheld from the poor; that the more dangerous and difficult the traffic might be, the more important it was that men of courage and character should undertake it and conduct it, and in this spirit he worked, simply and fearlessly."

However high was Sydney Dobell's standard of manhood, in that of womanhood he must, in this age of advanced opinions, have laid himself open to the charge of narrowness. Evidently he held the doctrine of the softer sex being the "inferior" animal. He says of "Aurora Leigh," though owning to having read it with "profound admiration:"

"I hold it to be no poem; for no woman, not even such a 'large-brained woman and large-hearted man' as Mrs. Browning . . . can create one; but it is one of the most signal and monumental books of modern times. . . . The more I live and study human nature, the more I perceive all feminine literature to be an error and an anomaly. A necessary anomaly at present, and to be dealt with as such, but always under all circumstances to be recognized as an anomaly, and never suffered to enter into the ideal of human society."

Consequently, with a sister who had committed

the great enormity of writing a book, he argues as follows:

"Now, I dare say, you will say I am very unreasonable when I confess that, much as I liked the performance, I was sorry to see it. But to show you the higher ratio of the apparent unreason, I will explain why. I never doubted that you could if you liked accomplish a thing of this kind, and better even than this, and take your place among the hourly aggregating troops of authoresses who are the pleasant vices and brilliant misfortunes of recent English literature. But I always hoped you would be content with the potentiality, and would set the much-required example of resisting a temptation which bids fair to stain with ink the sweetest sanctuaries of life, and taint with the inevitable evils of many unnatural and abnormal qualifications three fourths of the 'women of England.'

"It is precisely those women who could do otherwise, if they chose, that should be careful to set the example of reminding the sisterhood that there are nobler vocations in this world than writing books, and a truer womanhood than that which wears its heart upon its sleeve. All honor and sympathy to those women for whom *res angusta domi* makes this self-immolation an unmistakable necessity (and the best of them confess how sorely they feel the profanation and all the defeminizing influences of their profession), but whenever no irresistible duty demands the service, I think, and every year strengthens the conviction, that it ceases to be justifiable."

A dictum which few men, and possibly fewer women, will be inclined to endorse.

Clearly, the poet, devoted to a special idol, does not perceive the flaw in his own argument, viz., that if female authorship be so great an error, to commit it *for money* does not render the offence less venial,

but more so. The *res angusta domi* should be met in some other way than by such a sacrifice—granting it to be a sacrifice. A question which it is idle to argue, since the world's experience proves that as a man may be a man of genius and yet a good citizen, husband, father, and friend, so a woman may be able to express in art, literature, science, or any other form, that which it has pleased Heaven to put in her to express, without either ignoring or denying her womanhood, or giving up one iota of those domestic duties which are at once her utmost blessing and her greatest charm.

Nevertheless, it would be well for all women who desire to unwomanize themselves in any foolish way to lay to heart some of Sydney Dobell's words in a letter planned, but never finished, when the question "Why are early marriages more and more rare?" was mooted in the *Times* newspaper. The cause, he considers, is "the increasing selfishness of young men and the decreasing loveliness of young women."

"Lovely (he says) is an unsatisfactory word, but it is the best available. A lovely thing is a thing which is lovable, and it is more or less lovely as it is more or less adapted to be loved. . . . I never knew a man of more than moderate stature who felt undersized by the side of the loftiest female intellect, but I know that the strongest and proudest men have often felt ready to sink in sackcloth and ashes upon knees no human force could bend before the humility, the pu-

· rity, the unconsciousness, the self-oblivion of the simplest woman in the world."

A few prose writings, in which, as here, Dobell expressed, as if forced by inner compulsion, some of his strongest opinions, political, ethical, and moral, a few poems provoking diverse and most opposite criticisms (into which this present paper enters not, as it deals with the man rather than his writings), and now and then very beautiful letters to friends and kinsfolk: these were all that broke the sad silence of the next ten years.

Yet it seems to have been by no means a melancholy or idle life. The utmost amount of brain-work that his physicians allowed him to do he did daily. He studied several languages, so that during his compelled winters abroad—in the south of France, Spain, Italy—he was able thoroughly to throw himself into the social life of the people, and gather, invalid as he always was, more or less, all the good that could be got out of foreign travelling. Nor, though continually drifting hither and thither, seeking, for his wife and himself, the health that never came, does theirs seem to have been a dreary or homeless existence. He carried his "home" with him. Wherever he pitched his tent all his friends immediately gathered round him. Whether in Scotland or Gloucestershire, he seems to have had

the faculty of choosing most picturesque places to live in, and the still higher art of making every house a home. Even when driven to wandering he apparently made the best of his nomadic life by drinking in at every intellectual pore the keen delight of travelling.

But the years were fast narrowing wherein this restless spirit, which had begun life with such lofty aims, such gigantic aspirations, was allowed to do his work in the world, be it little or much. Sudden and mysterious attacks of illness, supposed to be partly epileptic, attacked him from time to time, and were followed by long prostration. Consecutive brain-work became impossible. All his bad symptoms were aggravated, if, indeed, they were not primarily caused, by an accident at first thought to be very slight. Standing on the shore at Puteoli, the supposed landing-place of St. Paul, and trying to realize for himself the exact sight which met the apostle's eyes, he stepped backwards into an old Roman drain, bruising the neck and the top of the spine. Successive attacks of illness followed.

"The one thing chiefly prescribed for him by his physicians at all times of his life—rest—seemed always unattainable. Rest of brain, rest of heart, were alike impossible. The more difficult all effort became, the more resolved he seemed to persevere in it; the more a duty cost him in personal suffering, the more indomitably determined was he not to give up the doing of it. Education, early habits, and

natural disposition, combined to produce an over-conscientiousness, which, so far as earthly results went, defeated its own end. To try and follow from his own memoranda and from other records his inner life at this time, is to wonder that nerves and brain so long endured such tension, and that the blow which soon struck him down did not fall sooner."

Something of this is indicated by the portrait of him prefixed to vol. i., and painted about this time by his artist-brother—his "favorite"—so often referred to, who thus writes concerning it:

"I have compared notes with three well-known artists who have made a similar attempt. We all agreed that we never had a subject to whom it was more difficult to do justice, and that the portraits were more or less failures. The general effect of our model was so extremely beautiful and impressive, though the features when examined and drawn in detail were not regular, and the expression was so subtle and peculiar that it was never caught on paper or canvas, so that the effect we wished to reproduce was marred and unsatisfactory when compared with the original. He belonged to no type, yet I have never seen another man at all like him; those who knew Lord Byron personally said Sydney's face recalled his. . . . But Byron's head, though of similar proportions, was small, while Sydney's was exceptionally large, some three inches larger in circumference than an ordinary-sized man's head, and its height was even more remarkable than the length. His eyes were the bluest violet I have ever tried to paint; no color could quite match their liquid ultramarine hues, and no lines convey their varying expression. Sometimes tender and sympathetic, at others stern and commanding, but usually, when in repose, they had a curious searching gaze, as though forever trying to read and solve some unknown problem. The nose

was straight, the upper lip rather long, but the mouth, even in middle age, was fresh, full, and expressive as a boy's."

In the summer of 1869 a second accident befell him. Trying a newly purchased horse, he was thrown—"found himself unable to move, beyond leaning upon one elbow, and at once faced the probability that he was dangerously, perhaps mortally, injured."

"Nearly three months of helplessness and much suffering followed. Though the injury proved to be, in some ways, less than could have been expected, the blow to the spine and the shock to the nervous system caused an amount of prostration that induced doubt as to whether he would recover the use of his limbs, and the muscles of one hip were so far strained and weakened that he never again felt to have a good and safe hold of his horse. Riding, which all his life had been the one almost unfailling restorative, became from this time impossible.

"During the many weeks before he regained power to walk, or even to stand, while he was very incredulous of ever being again anything but a cripple, those about him were struck with his wonderful serenity and thankfulness.

"In a sonnet written at this time, headed 'Under Especial Blessings'—a sonnet that for some of his friends was, and always remained, a psychological puzzle—he tried to express his sense of overpowering gratitude for the mercy which had spared him life.

"Love of life was, indeed, always characteristic of him. It was not simply that he was 'resigned to life,' because such was God's will, and for the sake of those who loved him, but that he rejoiced in life. Life, mere life, in the sweet air of the upper world, he valued as a priceless blessing. Knowing how intrinsic was his faith in all that

makes the hope of immortality most consoling and supporting, knowing, too, how the deepening presence of sickness made most things men count worth living for impossible to his later years, this joy in living was often, even to those most intimately near him, a marvel and a mystery."

Nevertheless, it probably helped in his temporary revival to a moderately healthy condition, during which his ever-active brain pertinaciously accomplished as much work as it could, and much more than it ought. Solid political papers—Dobell was from first to last a keen politician—alternated with light fancies.

"He often amused odd quarters of an hour when resting on his sofa, or longer periods of his unrestful nights, in making little *jeux d'esprit*, sometimes in English, often in French, Italian, or Spanish, which he afterwards scribbled down. He wrote also at such waste times two or three political or electioneering burlesques. His pleasure when a punning couplet on some question of the day, sent to *Punch*, was immediately inserted, was like a boy's. There was unselfishness as well as philosophy in the sweet-blooded way in which he made the most of all the more mirthful and pleasant aspects of his life. Although his deeper thoughts must always have been serious and solemn enough, they were never touched with gloom."

A "decided and severe epileptiform attack" convinced his friends and himself, as he says in a letter, "that his travelling days were over." It became necessary to settle in some comfortable house which might be "a home to live in and to die in." This was found in Barton End House, near Nailsworth,

Gloucestershire, not far from the pretty cottage where, eighteen years before, he had finished "Balder." In August, 1871, the family settled there. Truly "a house to live in," for he seems to have taken endless delight in "the roomy comfort of the substantial old house, and the beauty of its grounds and situation;" and, finally, "a house to die in."

Not, however, for three years more — three not unhappy years, despite his constant valetudinarianism and liability to those epileptiform attacks, though the symptoms of decided epilepsy were always absent.

"Most of his friends felt that the life he now led of self-denial, of suffering, of constant prostration and chastisement, of gallant resurgence from prostration, only to be overwhelmed afresh by the mysterious evil which sapped the powers of life, could have had for them no beauty that they should desire it. . . . Truly he possessed many kinds of joy. No one, his wife says, who had ever seen could ever forget the rapt delight with which, after a restless night of suffering, he would listen to the matin music of spring birds. . . . This pure joy in the exquisiteness of spring and of morning made the very opening of his eyes upon these aspects of nature a feast of thankful wonder. . . . His faithful 'joy in the deep things of God,' as revealed to us by the 'mind of Christ,' and his unwavering allegiance to the central truths of the religion thus revealed, . . . made an atmosphere about him which it was a spiritual and even a physical support and elevation to breathe. Consciousness of the weakness of his sick body was lost in the impression of wholesome health made by the sound and strong spirit."

But in spite of this the flesh was fast failing. In the spring and summer of 1874 sudden and heavy worldly cares consequent on the death of the manager of his house of business fell upon him. "Long letters had to be written, and written at once; long business discussions held, and complicated statements attended to." The all but dying man roused himself, and did all that was necessary to do, so that members of his own family who visited him were deceived, and "his wife's repeated expression, 'These things will kill him!' was considered to be passionate exaggeration, as was his mother's exclamation, 'Then you have killed him!' when told of two or three hours of close and uninterrupted business discussion, and of the mental vigor he had shown, only a month before the end."

That end his biographer alone must tell, for no one else could do it so touchingly and so well. After a brief three days' absence—

"The change she (his 'adopted daughter') saw was not only that of increased weakness; there was in his face a peculiar, inwardly absorbed expression, as if the invisible world, more real and present to him than the visible, so occupied him that it was only with effort he brought himself back from that far country to consciousness of what was passing around him. . . . A perfect peacefulness and placidity was the general expression of his face about this time, . . . so that those about him received an impression of insuperable vitality that would not allow apprehension of the great change.

"On one of the first days of August, he was persuaded to lie out in the open air on the sunny gravel sweep in front of the house for a quarter of an hour, and seemed in a peculiar manner to delight in all that met his eyes. He was taking his last fully conscious look at his beloved beech woods, and the sloping terrace garden at the east end of the house, of which he had always been specially fond. On going indoors, he fell into a profound sleep on the sofa. On his awaking, the evening was passed as usual, but in the middle of that night he woke in a strange tremble and confusion of mind, from which his brain never wholly cleared."

Nearly a week passed, during which he did not leave his room, and "had one or two fixed delusions." On the 8th of August acute delirium set in, and the strong, acute, delicate brain was overthrown forever.

"He lay for two weeks only partially and at intervals conscious—consciousness always marked by some gracious, pleasant, tender saying or recognition. His incoherent talk was oftenest of abstract philosophy, . . . or expressions of love, anxiety, and compassion for his wife. . . . 'How beautiful!' was the comment of all who looked upon his face. At all calm times he looked so much less ill than those who had watched him in other illnesses had often seen him look, that hope would occasionally make itself felt even now. But he never slept, except under the influence of sedatives, and these so visibly lowered all powers of life that to administer them was to hasten the end. Incessant restlessness wore him out.

"On the evening of August 22d, as his favorite rooks, winging home, were crossing the sky in front of his window, his last breath was quietly drawn. Rest came to him. The last sunshine of a gorgeous August evening lay rich and deep upon the scene he loved so

dearly. The arms of his wife were round him; his hand was held by his mother.

“On the first day of September, his favorite month, the month of his wife’s birthday, the month which in the old early days of happy courtship he passed at her house, his mortal remains were taken to the Painswick Cemetery, chosen for their resting-place as overlooking a district the ideal beauty of which was specially dear to him. The funeral service was read by Dr. Percival, who made a long journey from the place of his holiday sojourn to be present. His brothers and many old friends gathered round the coffin, which was lowered to its rest covered with fragrant white flowers. On his coffin (by his own wish, expressed years before) were engraved the words, ‘*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*’”

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